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XXth CENTURY SHAKESPEARE

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# HAMLET

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Edited with an Introduction and Notes

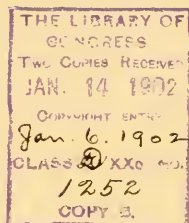
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Chicago



CHICAGO:  
AINSWORTH & COMPANY  
1902

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## NOTE.

The plan and the purpose of the Twentieth Century Shakespeare have been briefly stated in "Julius Cæsar," the first of the series. Such changes as the present play requires have been made: the account of Shakespeare's theater and his people is omitted, and an explanation of the fate theme in "Hamlet" is given instead of the information on Roman life. To this is added a few words about the meter. As in "JULIUS CÆSAR," the text of the Clarendon Press edition has been used; but, owing to the difference in the size of the type, it has been found impossible to follow the numbering of the lines in the scenes in which prose occurs.

In the preparation of notes, frequent reference has been made to Furness's "Variorum Shakespeare;" also to Rolfe's and to the Clarendon Press (CLARK and WRIGHT) edition; and the obligation is hereby acknowledged.





## "HAMLET" A WORLD TYPE.

Of all the plays of Shakespeare, "Hamlet" appeals most widely to human experience; voices most truthfully the woes of men who must act and dare not. Few of us are Macbeths; few would kill the king to gain his robe and crown; but many have felt the knotted scourge of Duty upon their backs, and have seen Dread in the gloom before them, daring them onward — have felt their lives to be guided, in spite of their struggles, by some force out of sight and beyond control. Rare indeed are the men with the firmness of resolve, the steadiness of nerve, the confidence in the strength of their purposes to challenge Fate to the uttermost, to seem even to shape their own destinies. These are the heroic minority. Most of us prefer the pleached garden, with herbs and apples; or, perhaps, the jug of wine, the easily earned loaf and the enticing singer, to the hot, determined struggle across the desert, the toilsome cleavage of the brier-choked wilderness, or the fight that must be fought. Leave the twelve labors to Hercules; we are partial to peace, with no loss of mirth. The hard duty that confronts us, we put off till a more opportune to-morrow; we dawdle, temporize, debate; we watch our wills stagger; we rival the "poor cat i' the adage;" and, attributing all to worthy motives, we rather admire ourselves for praiseworthy forbearance. Thus we fall for a time into self-deception, skilfully parrying the thrusts of our own consciences; until at last all occasions begin to inform against us, to shame us, and we are driven to the fight by the incessant scourge — the fight whose result is determined neither by our wills nor our desires, but by a blind, all-compelling Fate. So, in "Hamlet" we read our own histories.

Doubtless it was Shakespeare's history, too. Sad, indeed, that we have been denied the life story of the greatest of poets! If we could but know his boyhood, the dreams he dreamed on the shores of the Avon and in the paths about Stratford and Shuttery; if we could know what shattering of dreams he experienced, and what consciousness of weakness he felt as a mature man, in spite of his success in his despised profession, what duties urged him forward, what fears waved him back, what resistance he felt from the Invisible Hand, we should better under-

stand his kinship to ourselves and to his greatest creation; probably we should see that under the guise of an unhappy prince, the poet has written his own life — and ours.

"Hamlet" is an expression of life lived under the compulsion of unfit inner conditions and heavy outer circumstances — Fate: not the old mythical goddesses of destiny that played on Macbeth's ambition, and lured him on to a life of terror and a death of ignominy; not the mobled weird women who looked unerringly into the seeds of time, and knew what grain would grow and what would not; but the modern Fate, bereft of all pagan superstition, the inevitable resultant of forces unknown and immeasurable. Not that we would pronounce this modern Fate more or less forceful than that of our wise forefathers, who, in spite of their ignorance, knew everything; we contend merely a change in the point of view, a removal of the symbol: the fact remains that our destiny is indeterminate and uncontrollable.

The inner factor of Hamlet's Fate was his refinement and his learning. Every utterance reveals the student. He knew the schools; had read the classics of the old world; had wasted long nights on the philosophers; doubtless had made philosophies of his own. His studies had made their imprint indelibly upon him; he could not speak without betraying the trained thinker, even to the trained thinker's foibles — the little impertinent elaborations of thought and the too complicated utterance:

*"For every man hath business and desire,  
Such as it is,"*

is his analytic comment on his command to Marcellus and Horatio after telling them to go about their own affairs, and leave him and the ghost to theirs; and how tortuous, yet how certain in aim, his account of certain men taking corruption from some "vicious mole of nature in them!" To his searching keenness of intellect was added a refinement of feeling, a sensitiveness to every emotional motif, a responsiveness to every vibration of that myriad-toned harp, the human soul — all a result wrought by the world's greatest thinkers upon a nature superfine by birth.

Unfit preparation, this scholar's life, for the duty to which Hamlet was prompted by Heaven and Hell! He who would use sword and dagger must be trained to sword and dagger. Plato and Aristotle give little inspiration for the shedding of blood. Yet it fell to Hamlet to

meet and overcome, even by his own death, this disproportion between training and action. Is it strange that his foot was often on the threshold of the deed before unfaltering necessity drove him across it? Is it strange that his tragic story moves as slowly as Macbeth's moves fast? So goes the life of him who must act, and dare not.

This, then, is Hamlet's tragedy: being trained to think and to feel, he was compelled to *do*; his intellect and his sensibility so overtopped his will that whenever the moment of action seemed near, his entire vital energy was consumed in thought and feeling, and his hand hung palsied by his side. Thus his course of life was the resultant of two antagonistic forces, the unfit inner condition and the hard outward circumstance. A necessary resultant, too; unavoidable; predestined in the nature of things, and personified in every religion in some form or other. The wisdom of the Greeks recognized this necessity, and gave it a triple personality in the Moiræ, or Fates—Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, 'the blind furies with the abhorred shears,' who 'clip the thin-spun life.' Our northern forefathers, as wise as the Greeks, and as much awed by that "divinity that shapes our ends," had their Norns—Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld, weavers of the web of Fate. And what better name than Fate have we in these modern literal times?

Called from school at Wittenberg to seek for his noble father in the dust, Hamlet soon had other reason for his inky cloak than the death of his father—the frailty of a woman, and that woman his mother. Then the ghost of the dead king appeared, and laid upon the book-trained prince the task of a dagger stroke. Under the stress of the occasion, the young man's will bounded into a feverish fit of strength; his resolution was made on the instant, and duly inscribed in the most scholarly fashion on his tablets. The irony of it! Before the ghost's sepulchral voice had ceased to urge the oath from beneath the platform, Hamlet intuitively provided for his prolonged lapse in time and passion: he would "put an antic disposition on"! His vivid imagination had no doubt begun already to picture the touch of pointed steel on white, flinching flesh, the flowing of red blood, and the roll of dying eyes. He could not sweep to his revenge; his task was too great; with incipient despair he cursed it.

But the curse availed nothing; his oath was branded on his brain. And occasions began to inform against him: the player, "in a dream of passion," shamed him.

*"What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?"*

And no sooner had he pronounced himself "pigeon-liver'd" than he persuaded himself into further delay by the specious argument that the ghost might have been the devil plotting to damn him; he would have grounds more relative than the word of the unquiet spirit.

"What do you call the play?"—"The mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically." And tropically was the king caught in it. When his occulted guilt was so palpably unkenneled, what Nemesis overtook him other than an accusing finger shaken in his face and a burst of mad laughter? Had Hamlet no dagger? Had not his fingers the strength to throttle? No action here neither; only wild and whirling words—a riming jingle or two; an assertion of a thousand pounds of confidence in the ghost's word, but not a thousandth part of an appropriate deed; a hysterical call for music; a little serious fooling about playing on a pipe (this for the recovery of self-respect); a few insults to the decrepit Polonius—and all this, not "an antic disposition," but the utterance of an emotion too frenzied to be pent up or to be directed into the straight channel of action. Hamlet's assumed madness was for less trying moments than this. Here there was a lack of self-control, an utter paralysis of will, which, if it be madness at all, was Hamlet's only madness; and if it be not, then it remains to define the dread malady. No one has spoken more wisely than Polonius:

*"For, to define true madness,  
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?"*

But let that go. The end of the scene, with its bold words from an unfirm heart, is characteristic; a resolution to do nothing more terrible than to inflict unmanly torture upon an erring mother.

Hamlet recovered his self-possession here, but did not have the strength to drink hot blood and to appall the light of day with the bitterness of his revenge. Standing with drawn sword behind the kneeling king, he quibbled to avoid the deed from which his sick soul revolted; gave himself a trifling excuse, and waited for an opportunity more "pat." Nor did the ghost, who appeared while the young prince stung his mother's conscience, drive him to further resolution than to delve one yard below the mines of his treacherous school-fellows and blow them at the moon. This and the death of the harmless old counsellor, Ophelia's father, was all the irresolute scholar had caught in his

mouse-trap; for yet another opportunity for vengeance was passed by. Seeing well the cherub that saw the king's purposes in sending him to England, he did nothing but jest about us poor brothers of Polonius who fat ourselves for maggots. The pity of it all was that Hamlet knew his own weakness, and despised himself therefor; not a clod, but a scholar, he read his own soul, to which he found Fortinbras and his two thousand soldiers a bitter contrast. Their motive for courting death was a mere "fantasy and trick of fame;" his for inflicting it, "a father kill'd, a mother stain'd;" yet the occasion did not spur his dull revenge, but only awakened his introspection.

*"Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,  
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward, I do not know  
Why yet I live to say, 'This thing's to do;'  
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means  
To do't."*

Here was the lowest point to which Hamlet's manhood sunk—to know his disease, to have the remedy, and to be unable to use it.

Does it raise Hamlet from this depth to a heroic height in our minds to know that his restoring motive was a selfish one? that the villainy of the king in sending him to his death in England and his defeat of that plan were the circumstances that steadied his nerve, made his bosom firm, and rendered possible that calmness and self-command with which he said to Horatio, "The interim is mine"? Even in the end, when the king lies dead before us, do we not feel that our hero is no hero, but a toy of Fate, and one whose surpassing wisdom had led him to defy augury?

The final scene approaches. Returning from his captivity among the pirates, Hamlet meets Horatio, and in the graveyard jests with the clown over the pit that is to contain one that was a woman, but is now no more—the woman he loved best; sent to her grave by his own hasty, inconsiderate act. The compulsion of circumstances is almost complete; however weak Hamlet has been before, now he is calm enough; he feels the finite fading from about him, and the Infinite brooding over him;

"if it be now, 'tis not to come . . . the readiness is all." We cannot believe that in these last moments Hamlet is so ignoble as to deceive Laertes by the insincere lines about his own madness; surely some other hand than that of the great poet wrote most of the speech beginning, "Give me your pardon, sir;" the first two lines and the last five do much to redeem the manhood of the prince; the rest make him craven. Let us cast them out.

The final moment has come. We have at last what we desire — the blood of the murderer; and if we are saddened by the sacrifice of Hamlet himself, let it be considered that only by such a martyrdom can he be raised in our esteem for so long delaying the execution of the ghost's dread command. "The rest is silence."

Those thinkers are not wanting who say there is another factor than the inner condition and the outward circumstance in the determination of our march into the fog called life. Effort, say they. But whence the effort? It is merely the act of the will, and is from within; a part of the inner condition. Given, a certain mind and a certain world about it, and but one life is possible. Given, a certain weight and speed of arrow; a certain force of wind, and a certain degree of deflection or retardation is inevitable. The indeterminateness of it all is what ancient peoples personified in such deities as the Moiræ and the Norns — Fate; for which we have no better name.

And this story of Hamlet is older than civilization; perhaps as old as life itself. The study of myths has revealed their unfathomable antiquity; in the days when man's imagination took its first flights, he made stories concerning the phenomena of nature — the rising and the setting of the sun, the coming and the going of summer, the flashing of the northern lights; — stories which in time were told as if the actors in them were men and women, the former significance being forgotten. So it was, probably, with "Hamlet;" originally a sun-myth, typifying the struggle between summer and winter; finally a story of a human life, put in its first literary form by Saxo Grammaticus, and in its last and greatest by Shakespeare, who, knowing nothing of its origin, saw in it the essentials of an experience common to the lot of man.



## METER.

Students who are especially interested in Shakespeare's meter and the development of it, will find a good summing up of the matter in Professor Dowden's "Shakespeare" primer, from which a few facts are given here.

The chronology of the plays is determined partly by the number of "end-stopt" and "run-on" verses, "weak endings" and "double (or feminine) endings."

The early plays have many lines with pauses at the end; these are "end-stopt" verses. As his genius ripened, the poet formed the habit of running the sense on from one line to another, thus securing greater ease and avoiding any suggestion of monotony; hence the term, "run-on" verses.

There is a variation, too, in the number of monosyllabic "weak endings" of lines, of which two degrees have been noticed. The first group contains such words as the voice can dwell on to a small extent, as "*am, are, be, can, could*; the auxiliaries *do, does, has, had*; *I, they, thou*, and others." These are called "light endings." The other group includes "such words as *and, for, from, if, in, of, or*." These are called "weak endings." The voice cannot dwell upon them, but is compelled to run them on rapidly with the next line. Weak endings hardly appear in the early and middle plays; the poet seems to have adopted the new method very suddenly. Many "light endings" appear in "Macbeth."

When the line has an extra, unaccented syllable at the end, the final one of a word of more than one syllable, it is said to have a "double (or feminine) ending." The following line affords an illustration:

"*The ver | y place | puts toys | of des | pera | tion.*"

Shakespeare seems to have used the "double ending" more as he grew older.

It is an interesting exercise to compare a few scenes of the plays you have read with a few from "Hamlet" in order to learn how much these verse tests avail in the determination of the order in which the plays were written.





# HAMLET,

## PRINCE OF DENMARK.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.		REYNALDO, a servant to Polonius.
HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present, king.		Players.
Polonius, lord chamberlain.		Two Clowns, grave-diggers.
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.		FORTINERAS, prince of Norway.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.		A Captain.
VOLTIMAND,	} courtiers.	English Ambassadors.
CORNELIUS,		
ROSENCRANTZ,		GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
GUILDENSTERN,		OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.
OSRIC,		Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.
A Gentleman,	} officers.	Ghost of Hamlet's Father.
A Priest,		
MARCELLUS,		SCENE : <i>Denmark.</i>
BERNARDO,		
FRANCISCO, a soldier,		

## ACT I.

SCENE I. *Elsinore. A platform before the castle.*

FRANCISCO *at his post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

*Ber.* Who's there?

*Fran.* Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

*Ber.* Long live the king!

*Fran.* Bernardo?

*Ber.* He.

*Fran.* You come most carefully upon your hour.

*Ber.* 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed,  
Francisco.

*Fran.* For this relief much thanks : ' tis bitter cold,  
And I am sick at heart.

*Ber.* Have you had quiet guard?

*Fran.* Not a mouse stirring.

*Ber.* Well, good night. 11

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

*Fran.* I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who is  
there?

*Enter* HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

*Hor.* Friends to this ground.

*Mar.* And liegemen to the Dane.

*Fran.* Give you good night.

*Mar.* O, farewell, honest soldier :

Who hath relieved you?

*Fran.* Bernardo hath my place.

Give you good night. [Exit.

*Mar.* Holla ! Bernardo !

*Ber.* Say,

What, is Horatio there?

*Hor.* A piece of him.

*Ber.* Welcome, Horatio : welcome, good Marcellus. 20

*Mar.* What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

*Ber.* I have seen nothing.

*Mar.* Horatio says ' tis but our fantasy,  
And will not let belief take hold of him  
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:  
Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night,  
That if again this apparition come,  
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

*Hor.* Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

*Ber.* Sit down awhile ;  
And let us once again assail your ears, 31  
That are so fortified against our story,  
What we have two nights seen.

*Hor.* Well, sit we down,  
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

*Ber.* Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one,—

*Enter Ghost.*

*Mar.* Peace, break thee off ; look, where it comes  
again!

*Ber.* In the same figure, like the king that's dead.41

*Mar.* Thou art a scholar ; speak to it, Horatio.

*Ber.* Looks it not like the king ? mark it, Horatio.

*Hor.* Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

*Ber.* It would be spoke to.

*Mar.* Question it, Horatio.

*Hor.* What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and warlike form  
In which the majesty of buried Denmark  
Did sometimes march ? by heaven I charge thee, speak !

*Mar.* It is offended.

*Ber.* See, it stalks away ! 50

*Hor.* Stay ! speak, speak ! I charge thee, speak !

[*Exit Ghost.*]

*Mar.* 'Tis gone and will not answer.

*Ber.* How now, Horatio ! you tremble and look pale :  
Is not this something more than fantasy ?

What think you on't ?

*Hor.* Before my God, I might not this believe  
Without the sensible and true avouch  
Of mine own eyes.

*Mar.* Is it not like the king ?

*Hor.* As thou art to thyself :

Such was the very armor he had on 60

When he the ambitious Norway combated ;  
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

'Tis strange.

*Mar.* Thus twice before, and jump at this dead  
hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

*Hor.* In what particular thought to work I know not ;  
But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,  
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

*Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that  
knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch 71

So nightly toils the subject of the land,  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war ;

Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week ;  
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste  
Doth make the night joint-laborer with the day :  
Who is 't that can inform me ?

*Hor.*

That can I ;

At least the whisper goes so. Our last king, 80  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dared to the combat ; in which our valiant Hamlet —  
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him —  
Did slay this Fortinbras ; who, by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands  
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror :  
Against the which, a moiety competent 90  
Was gaged by our king ; which had return'd  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same covenant  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't : which is no other — 100  
As it doth well appear unto our state —  
But to recover of us, by strong hand

And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost : and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

*Ber.* I think it be no other but e'en so :  
Well may it sort, that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch ; so like the king 110  
That was and is the question of these wars.

*Hor.* A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:  
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
Disasters in the sun : and the moist star  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse: 120  
And even the like precurse of fierce events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on,  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

*Re-enter Ghost.*

But soft, behold ! lo, where it comes again !  
I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion !  
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
Speak to me:

If there be any good thing to be done,  
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
Speak to me:

130

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,  
O, speak !

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,  
Speak of it : stay, and speak ! [*Cock crows.*] Stop it,  
Marcellus.

*Mar.* Shall I strike at it with my partisan ?

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*Hor.* Do, if it will not stand.

*Ber.* 'Tis here !

*Hor.* 'Tis here !

*Mar.* 'Tis gone ! [*Exit Ghost.*]

We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
To offer it the show of violence ;  
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

*Ber.* It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

*Hor.* And then it started like a guilty thing  
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,  
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
Awake the god of day ; and at his warning,  
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
To his confine: and of the truth herein

150

This present object made probation.

*Mar.* It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long : 160  
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,  
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

*Hor.* So have I heard and do in part believe it.  
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:  
Break we our watch up ; and by my advice,  
Let us impart what we have seen to-night  
Unto young Hamlet ; for, upon my life, 170  
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him :  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

*Mar.* Let's do't I pray ; and I this morning know  
Where we shall find him most conveniently. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A room of state in the castle.*

*Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES,  
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.*

*King.* Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature



That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,— 10  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—  
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, 20  
Collegued with the dream of his advantage,  
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting :  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—  
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose,— to suppress 30  
His further gait herein; in that the levies,  
The lists and full proportions, are all made  
Out of his subject: and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,

For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;  
 Giving to you no further personal power  
 To business with the king more than the scope  
 Of these delated articles allow.

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

*Cor.* } In that and all things will we show our duty.  
*Vol.* }

*King.* We doubt it nothing : heartily farewell. 41

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
 You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
 And lose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,  
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
 The head is not more native to the heart,  
 The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
 Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
 What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

*Laer.* My dread lord, 50

Your leave and favor to return to France;  
 From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,  
 To show my duty in your coronation,  
 Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
 My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,  
 And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

*King.* Have you your father's leave? What says  
 Polonius?

*Pol.* He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow  
 leave

By laborsome petition, and at last  
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent: 60  
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

*King.* Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will !  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

*Ham.* [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than  
kind.

*King.* How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

*Ham.* Not so, my lord: I am too much i' the sun.

*Queen.* Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids 70

Seek for thy noble father in the dust :

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common.

*Queen.* If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

*Ham.* Seems, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not  
'seems.'

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, 80  
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play:

But I have that within which passeth show;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

*King.* 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,  
Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father :  
But, you must know, your father lost a father,  
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound 90  
In filial obligation for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow : but to persever  
In obstinate condolment is a course  
Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief :  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschool'd :  
For what we know must be and is as common  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
Why should we in our peevish opposition 100  
Take it to heart? Fie ! 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,  
From the first corse till he that died to-day,  
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth  
This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father : for let the world take note,  
You are the most immediate to our throne;  
And with no less nobility of love 110  
Than that which dearest father bears his son,  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent

In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire :  
And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

*Queen.* Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet :  
I pray thee, stay with us ; go not to Wittenberg.

*Ham.* I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 120

*King.* Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply :  
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come ;  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart : in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,  
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

*[Exeunt all but Hamlet.]*

*Ham.* O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew ! 130  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter ! O God ! God !  
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world !  
Fie on't ! ah fie ! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed ; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this !  
But two months dead ! nay, not so much, not two :  
So excellent a king ; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to satyr ; so loving to my mother 140

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth !  
 Must I remember ? why, she would hang on him,  
 As if increase of appetite had grown  
 By what it fed on : and yet, within a month —  
 Let me not think on't — Frailty, thy name is  
                   woman ! —

A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
 With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
 Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she —  
 O God ! a beast, that wants discourse of reason, 150  
 Would have mourn'd longer — married with my uncle,  
 My father's brother, but no more like my father  
 Than I to Hercules : within a month :  
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
 She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets !  
 It is not nor it cannot come to good :  
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.

*Hor.* Hail to your lordship !

*Ham.* I am glad to see you well :  
 Horatio, — or I do forget myself. 161

*Hor.* The same, my lord, and your poor servant  
                   ever.

*Ham.* Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name  
                   with you :

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio ?  
Marcellus ?

*Mar.* My good lord —

*Ham.* I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.  
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg ?

*Hor.* A truant disposition, good my lord.

*Ham.* I would not hear your enemy say so, 170  
Nor shall you do my ear that violence,  
To make it truster of your own report  
Against yourself : I know you are no truant.  
But what is your affair in Elsinore ?  
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

*Hor.* My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

*Ham.* I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student ;

I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

*Hor.* Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio ! the funeral baked-meats 180

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio !

My father ! — methinks I see my father.

*Hor.* O where, my lord ?

*Ham.* In my mind's eye, Horatio.

*Hor.* I saw him once ; he was a goodly king.

*Ham.* He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

*Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

*Ham.* Saw ? who ?

190

*Hor.* My lord, the king your father.

*Ham.* The king my father !

*Hor.* Season your admiration for a while  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,  
This marvel to you.

*Ham.* For God's love, let me hear.

*Hor.* Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe, 200  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them ; thrice he walk'd  
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length ; whilst they, distill'd  
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did ;  
And I with them the third night kept the watch :  
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,  
Form of the thing, each word made true and good, 210  
The apparition comes : I knew your father ;  
These hands are not more like.

*Ham.* But where was this ?

*Mar.* My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

*Ham.* Did you not speak to it ?

*Hor.* My lord, I did ;



But answer made it none : yet once methought  
 It lifted up it head and did address  
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak;  
 But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
 And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,  
 And vanish'd from our sight.

*Ham.* 'Tis very strange.

220

*Hor.* As I do live, my honor'd lord, 'tis true;  
 And we did think it writ down in our duty  
 To let you know of it.

*Ham.* Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
 Hold you the watch to-night ?

*Mar.* }  
*Ber.* } We do, my lord.

*Ham.* Arm'd say you?

*Mar.* }  
*Ber.* } Arm'd, my lord.

*Ham.* From top to toe ?

*Mar.* }  
*Ber.* } My lord, from head to foot.

*Ham.* Then you saw not his face ?

*Hor.* O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up. 230

*Ham.* What, look'd he frowningly ?

*Hor.* A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

*Ham.* Pale or red ?

*Hor.* Nay, very pale.

*Ham.* And fix'd his eyes upon you ?

*Hor.* Most constantly.

*Ham.* I would I had been there.

*Hor.* It would have much amazed you.

*Ham.* Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

*Hor.* While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

*Mar.* } Longer, longer.  
*Ber.* }

*Hor.* Not when I saw't.

*Ham.* His beard was grizzled? no?

*Hor.* It was as I have seen it in his life, 241  
 A sable silver'd.

*Ham.* I will watch to-night;  
 Perchance 'twill walk again.

*Hor.* I warrant it will.

*Ham.* If it assume my noble father's person,  
 I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape  
 And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,  
 If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,  
 Let it be tenable in your silence still;  
 And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,  
 Give it an understanding, but no tongue: 250  
 I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:  
 Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
 I'll visit you.

*All.* Our duty to your honor.

*Ham.* Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;  
 I doubt some foul play; would the night were come!  
 Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,  
 Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.  
[*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *A room in Polonius's house.**Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

*Laer.* My necessities are embark'd : farewell :  
 And, sister, as the winds give benefit  
 And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
 But let him hear from you.

*Oph.* Do you doubt that ?

*Laer.* For Hamlet and the trifling of his favor,  
 Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,  
 A violet in the youth of primy nature,  
 Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
 The perfume and suppliance of a minute,  
 No more.

*Oph.* No more but so ?

*Laer.* Think it no more : 10

For nature crescent does not grow alone  
 In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,  
 The inward service of the mind and soul  
 Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
 And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
 The virtue of his will : but you must fear,  
 His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;  
 For he himself is subject to his birth :  
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
 Carve for himself, for on his choice depends 20  
 The safety and health of this whole state ;  
 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body

Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves  
you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed ; which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain,  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmaster'd importunity.

30

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon :  
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes :  
The canker galls the infants of the spring,  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
Be wary then ; best safety lies in fear :  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

40

*Oph.* I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;  
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads  
And recks not his own rede.

50

*Laer.* O, fear me not.  
I stay too long : but here my father comes.

*Enter* POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace ;  
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

*Pol.*- Yet here, Laertes ! aboard, aboard, for  
shame !

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are stay'd for. There ; my blessing with  
thee !

And these few precepts in thy memory  
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act. 60

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice :  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, 70  
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;

For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all : to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell : my blessing season this in thee !

80

*Laer.* Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

*Pol.* The time invites you ; go ; your servants tend.

*Laer.* Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well  
What I have said to you.

*Oph.* 'Tis in my memory lock'd,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

*Laer.* Farewell. [Exit.

*Pol.* What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?

*Oph.* So please you, something touching the Lord  
Hamlet.

*Pol.* Marry, well bethought :  
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late  
Given private time to you, and you yourself  
Have of your audience been most free and boun-  
teous :

90

If it be so — as so 'tis put on me,  
And that in way of caution — I must tell you,  
You do not understand yourself so clearly  
As it behoves my daughter and your honor.  
What is between you ? give me up the truth.

*Oph.* He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders  
Of his affection to me.

100

*Pol.* Affection ! pooh ! you speak like a green girl,

Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

*Oph.* I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

*Pol.* Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more  
dearly;

Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Running it thus — you'll tender me a fool.

*Oph.* My lord, he hath importuned me with love 110  
In honorable fashion.

*Pol.* Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his speech,  
my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

*Pol.* Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,  
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,  
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,  
You must not take for fire. From this time 120  
Be something scanter of your maiden presence;  
Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
Believe so much in him, that he is young,  
And with a larger tether may he walk  
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,  
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,

Not of that dye which their investments show,  
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds, 130  
 The better to beguile. This is for all :  
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
 Have you so slander any moment leisure,  
 As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
 Look to't, I charge you : come your ways.

*Oph.* I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The platform.*

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.*

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

*Hor.* It is a nipping and an eager air.

*Ham.* What hour now?

*Hor.* I think it lacks of twelve.

*Mar.* No, it is struck.

*Hor.* Indeed? I heard it not: it then draws near  
 the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.*

What does this mean, my lord?

*Ham.* The king doth wake to-night and takes his  
 rouse,

Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, 10  
 The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
 The triumph of his pledge.



*Hor.*

Is it a custom :

*Ham.* Ay, marry, is't:

But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honor'd in the breach than the observance.  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations :  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition ; and indeed it takes 20  
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So, oft it chances in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As, in their birth— wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin —  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
The form of plausible manners, that these men, 30  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star, —  
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo —  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault : the dram of eale  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
To his own scandal.

*Enter Ghost.*

*Hor.* Look, my lord, it comes !

*Ham* Angels and ministers of grace defend us !  
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 40  
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
 Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
 That I will speak to thee : I'll call thee Hamlet,  
 King, father, royal Dane : O, answer me !  
 Let me not burst in ignorance ; but tell  
 Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
 Have burst their cerements ; why the sepulchre,  
 Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,  
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws, 50  
 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
 That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
 Making night hideous ; and we fools of nature  
 So horridly to shake our disposition  
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls ?  
 Say, why is this ? wherefore ? what should we do ?

*[Ghost beckons Hamlet.]*

*Hor.* It beckons you to go away with it,  
 As if it some impartment did desire  
 To you alone.

*Mar.* Look, with what courteous action 60  
 It waves you to a more removed ground :  
 But do not go with it.

*Hor.* No, by no means.

*Ham.* It will not speak ; then I will follow it.

*Hor.* Do not, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, what should be the fear ?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself ?  
It waves me forth again : I'll follow it.

*Hor.* What if it tempt you toward the flood, my  
lord,

Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff 70  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? think of it :  
The very place puts toys of desperation,  
Without more motive, into every brain  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.

*Ham.* It waves me still.  
Go on ; I'll follow thee. 79

*Mar.* You shall not go, my lord.

*Ham.* Hold off your hands.

*Hor.* Be ruled ; you shall not go.

*Ham.* My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.  
By heavens, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me :

I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*

*Hor.* He waxes desperate with imagination.

*Mar.* Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

*Hor.* Have after. To what issue will this come?

*Mar.* {Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.}

*Hor.* Heaven will direct it.

*Mar.* Nay, let's follow him. 91

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *Another part of the platform.*

*Enter GHOST and HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Whither wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go  
no further.

*Ghost.* Mark me.

*Ham.* I will.

*Ghost.* My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

*Ham.* Alas, poor ghost!

*Ghost.* Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

*Ham.* Speak; I am bound to hear.

*Ghost.* So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt  
hear.

*Ham.* What?

*Ghost.* I am thy father's spirit;  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,

And for the day confined to fast in fires,  
 Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
 Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid  
 To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
 I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
 Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part  
 And each particular hair to stand an end,  
 Like quills upon the fretful porpentine :  
 But this eternal <sup>mark</sup>blazon must not be  
 To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list !  
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love —

20

*Ham.* O God !

*Ghost.* Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

*Ham.* Murder !

*Ghost.* Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;  
 But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

*Ham.* Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as  
 swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love,  
 May sweep to my revenge.

30

*Ghost.* I find thee apt ;  
 And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
 That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,  
 Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :  
 'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
 A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark  
 Is by a forged process of my death

Rankly abused : but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

*Ham.* O my prophetic soul !  
My uncle !

40

*Ghost.* Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts, —  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce !—won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen :  
O Hamlet; what a falling-off was there !  
From me, whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage, and to decline  
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine !

50

But virtue, as it never will be moved,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed  
And prey on garbage.

But soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leperous distilment ; whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man

60

That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
 The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
 And with a sudden vigor it doth posset  
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
 The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ; 70  
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
 All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd :  
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
 Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled,  
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
 With all my imperfections on my head :  
 O, horrible ! O, horrible ! most horrible ! 80  
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
 But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
 Against thy mother aught : leave her to heaven  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once !  
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire : 90

Adieu, adieu, adieu ! remember me. [Exit.

*Ham.* O all you host of heaven ! O earth ! what  
 else ?

And shall I couple hell ? O, fie ! Hold, hold, my heart :

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee !  
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee !  
 Yea, from the table of my memory  
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, 100  
 That youth and observation copied there ;  
 And thy commandment all alone shall live  
 Within the book and volume of my brain,  
 Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven !  
 O most pernicious woman !  
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain !  
 My tables,—meet it is I set it down,  
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
 At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark: [*Writing.*  
 So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word; 110  
 It is 'Adieu, adieu ! remember me.'

I have sworn't.

*Mar.* } [*Within.*] My lord, my lord !  
*Hor.* }

*Mar.* [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet !

*Hor.* [*Within.*] Heaven secure him !

*Ham.* So be it !

*Hor.* [*Within.*] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord !

*Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.*

*Mar.* How is't, my noble lord ?

*Hor.* What news, my lord ?



*Ham.* O, wonderful!

*Hor.* Good my lord, tell it.

*Ham.* No; you will reveal it.

*Hor.* Not I, my lord, by heaven.

*Mar.* Nor I, my lord. 120

*Ham.* How say you, then; would heart of man  
once think it?

But you'll be secret? •

*Hor.* }  
*Mar.* }                    Ay, by heaven, my lord.

*Ham.* There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Den-  
mark

But he's an arrant knave.

*Hor.* There needs no ghost, my lord, come from  
the grave

To tell us this.

*Ham.* Why, right; you are i' the right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:  
You, as your business and desire shall point you;  
(For every man hath business and desire, 130  
Such as it is;) and for my own poor part,  
Look you, I'll go pray.

*Hor.* These are but wild and whirling words, my  
lord.

*Ham.* I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, faith, heartily.

*Hor.* There's no offence, my lord.

*Ham.* Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,

And much offence too. Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:

For your desire to know what is between us, 140  
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good friends,  
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

*Hor.* What is't my lord? we will.

*Ham.* Never make known what you have seen to-  
night.

*Hor.* } My lord, we will not.  
*Mar.* }

*Ham.* Nay, but swear't.

*Hor.* In faith,

My lord, not I.

*Mar.* Nor I, my lord, in faith.

*Ham.* Upon my sword.

*Hor.* We have sworn, my lord, already.

*Ham.* Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

*Ghost.* [*Beneath.*] Swear.

*Ham.* Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,  
truepenny? 150

Come on: you hear this fellow in the cellarage:

Consent to swear.

*Hor.* Propose the oath, my lord.

*Ham.* Never to speak of this that you have seen,  
Swear by my sword.

*Ghost.* [*Beneath.*] Swear.

*Ham.* Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.  
Come hither, gentlemen,

And lay your hands again upon my sword:  
Never to speak of this that you have heard,  
Swear by my sword.

160

*Ghost.* [*Beneath.*] Swear.

*Ham.* Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth  
so fast?

A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

*Hor.* O day and night, but this is wondrous  
strange!

*Ham.* And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

170

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on,

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we  
would,'

Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they  
might,'

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me: this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you,  
Swear.

180

*Ghost.* [*Beneath.*] Swear.

*Ham.* Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear.*]

So, gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you:

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

May do, to express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right!

190

Nay, come, let's go together.

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *A room in Polonius's house.*

*Enter* POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.

*Pol.* Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

*Rey.* I will, my lord.

*Pol.* You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquire  
Of his behavior.

*Rey.* My lord, I did intend it.

*Pol.* Marry, well said; very well said. Look you,  
sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris,  
And how, and who, what means, and where they  
keep,

What company, at what expense; and finding  
By this encompassment and drift of question 10  
That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
Than your particular demands will touch it:  
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;  
As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,  
And in part him': do you mark this, Reynaldo?

*Rey.* Ay, very well, my lord.

*Pol.* 'And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:  
But if't be he I mean, he's very wild;  
Addicted so and so': and there put on him  
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank 20  
As may dishonor him; take heed of that;  
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

*Rey.* As gaming, my lord.

*Pol.* Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarreling:  
You may go so far.

*Rey.* My lord, that would dishonor him.

*Pol.* Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.  
You must not put another scandal on him,  
That he is open to incontinency; 30  
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so  
quaintly

That they may seem the taints of liberty,  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
Of general assault.

*Rey.* But, my good lord,—

*Pol.* Wherefore should you do this?

*Rey.* Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

*Pol.* Marry, sir, here's my drift ;

And I believe it is a fetch of warrant :

You laying these slight sullies on my son,

As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,

40

Mark you,

Your party in converse, him you would sound,

Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured

He closes with you in this consequence ;

' Good sir,' or so, or ' friend,' or ' gentleman,'

According to the phrase or the addition

Of man and country.

*Rey.* Very good, my lord.

*Pol.* And then, sir, does he this—he does—what was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say something : where did I leave ?

51

*Rey.* At ' closes in the consequence,' at ' friend or so,' and ' gentleman.'

*Pol.* At ' closes in the consequence,' ay, marry ;

He closes thus : ' I known the gentlemen ;

I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,

Or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as you say,

There was a' gaming, there o'ertook in 's rouse ;

There falling out at tennis' : or perchance,

' I saw him enter such a house of sale,'

60

Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now ;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth :

And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

With windlasses and with assays of bias,

By indirections find directions out :

So by my former lecture and advice,

Shall you my son. You have me, have you not ?

*Rey.* My lord, I have.

*Pol.* God be wi' you ; fare you well.

*Rey.* Good my lord !

70

*Pol.* Observe his inclination in yourself.

*Rey.* I shall, my lord.

*Pol.* And let him ply his music.

*Rey.* Well, my lord.

*Pol.* Farewell ! *[Exit Reynaldo.]*

*Enter OPHELIA.*

How now, Ophelia ! what's the matter ?

*Oph.* O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted !

*Pol.* With what, i' the name of God ?

*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,

Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced ;

No hat upon his head : his stockings foul'd,

Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle ;

80

Pale as his shirt ; his knees knocking each other,

And with a look so piteous in purport

As if he had been loosed out of hell

To speak of horrors, he comes before me.

*Pol.* Mad for thy love ?

*Oph.* My lord, I do not know ;  
But truly I do fear it.

*Pol.* What said he ?

*Oph.* He took me by the wrist and held me hard ;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;  
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face 90  
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so.  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being : that done, he lets me go :  
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;  
For out o' doors he went without their help,  
And to the last bended their light on me. 100

*Pol.* Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.  
This is the very ecstasy of love,  
Whose violent property fordoes itself  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings  
As oft as any passion under heaven  
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.  
What, have you given him any hard words of late ?

*Oph.* No, my good lord ; but, as you did command,  
I did repel his letters and denied  
His access to me.

*Pol.* That hath made him mad.



I am sorry that with better heed and judgement  
I had not quoted him : I fear'd he did but trifle,  
And meant to wreck thee ; but beshrew my jealousy !  
By heaven, it is as proper to our age  
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions  
As it is common for the younger sort  
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king :  
This must be known ; which, being kept close, might  
move  
More grief to hide than hate to utter love. 119  
Come. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,  
and Attendants.

*King.* Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guilden-  
stern !

Moreover that we much did long to see you,  
The need we have to use you did provoke  
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
Of Hamlet's transformation ; so call it,  
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man  
Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
So much from the understanding of himself,  
I cannot dream of : I entreat you both, 120  
That, being of so young days brought up with him,  
And sith so neighbor'd to his youth and havior,

That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
Some little time : so by your companies  
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather  
So much as from occasion you may glean,  
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,  
That open'd lies within our remedy.

*Queen.* Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of  
you ;

And sure I am two men there are not living 20  
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you  
To show us so much gentry and good will  
As to expend your time with us awhile,  
For the supply and profit of our hope,  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
As fits a king's remembrance.

*Ros.* Both your majesties  
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
Put your dread pleasures more into command  
Than to entreaty.

*Guil.* But we both obey,  
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent 30  
To lay our service freely at your feet,  
To be commanded.

*King.* Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guilden-  
stern.

*Queen.* Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosen-  
crantz.

And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,

And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

*Guil.* Heavens make our presence and our practices

Pleasant and helpful to him !

*Queen.*

Ay, Amen !

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some Attendants.*]

*Enter* POLONIUS.

*Pol.* The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,  
Are joyfully return'd. 41

*King.* Thou still hast been the father of good news.

*Pol.* Have I, my lord ? I assure my good liege,  
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,  
Both to my God and to my gracious king :  
And I do think, or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath used to do, that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

*King.* O, speak of that ; that do I long to hear. 50

*Pol.* Give first admittance to the ambassadors ;  
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

*King.* Thysself do grace to them, and bring them in. [*Exit Polonius.*]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found  
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

*Queen.* I doubt it is no other but the main ;  
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

*King.* Well, we shall sift him.



Meantime we thank you for your well-took labor :  
Go to your rest ; at night we'll feast together :  
Most welcome home !

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*]

*Pol.* This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,  
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.  
(Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,) 90  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad :  
Mad call I it ; for, to define true madness,  
What is't but to be nothing else but mad ?  
But let that go.

*Queen.* More matter, with less art.

*Pol.* Madam, I swear I use no art at all.  
That he is mad, 'tis true : 'tis true 'tis pity ;  
And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure ;  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
Mad let us grant him then : and now remains 100  
That we find out the cause of this effect,  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
For this effect defective comes by cause :  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.  
Perpend.

I have a daughter — have while she is mine —  
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,  
Hath given me this : now gather, and surmise.

[*Reads*]

‘To the celestial and my soul’s idol, the most beautified Ophelia,’ — 110

That’s an ill phrase, a vile phrase ; ‘beautified’ is a vile phrase : but you shall hear. Thus :

[*Reads*]

‘In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.’

*Queen.* Came this from Hamlet to her ?

*Pol.* Good madam, stay awhile ; I will be faithful.

[*Reads*] ‘Doubt thou the stars are fire ;

Doubt that the sun doth move ;

Doubt truth to be a liar ;

But never doubt I love. 119

‘O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers ; I have not art to reckon my groans : but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

‘Thine evermore, most dear lady,  
whilst this machine is to him,

HAMLET.’

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me,  
And more above, hath his solicitings,  
As they fell out by time, by means and place,  
All given to mine ear.

*King.*

But how hath she

Received his love ?

*Pol.*

What do you think of me ? 130

*King.* As of a man faithful and honorable.

*Pol.* I would fain prove so. But what might you think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing —  
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,  
Before my daughter told me — what might you,  
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,  
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,  
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight ;  
What might you think? No, I went round to work, 140  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak :  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star ;  
This must not be : ' and then I prescripts gave her,  
That she should lock herself from his resort,  
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;  
And he repulsed, a short tale to make,  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension 150  
Into the madness wherein now he raves  
And all we mourn for.

*King.* Do you think this !

*Queen.* It may be, very like.

*Pol.* Hath there been such a time, I'd fain know  
that,

That I have positively said ' 'Tis so, '

When it proved otherwise ?

*King.* Not that I know.

*Pol.* [*Pointing to his head and shoulder.*] Take  
this from this, if this be otherwise :

If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed,  
Within the center.

*King.* How may we try it further? 160

*Pol.* You know, sometimes he walks four hours  
together  
Here in the lobby.

*Queen.* So he does indeed.

*Pol.* At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:  
Be you and I behind an arras then;  
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,  
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon  
Let me be no assistant for a state,  
But keep a farm and carters.

*King.* We will try it.

*Queen.* But look where sadly the poor wretch comes  
reading.

*Pol.* Away, I do beseech you, both away: 170  
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

*Enter HAMLET, reading.*

O, give me leave:  
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

*Ham.* Well, God-a-mercy.

*Pol.* Do you know me, my lord?

*Ham.* Excellent well: you are a fishmonger.

*Pol.* Not I, my lord.

*Ham.* Then I would you were so honest a man.



*Pol.* Honest, my lord!

*Ham.* Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand. 180

*Pol.* That's very true, my lord.

*Ham.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion—Have you a daughter?

*Pol.* I have, my lord.

*Ham.* Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive,—friend, look to't.

*Pol.* [*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord? 193

*Ham.* Words, words, words.

*Pol.* What is the matter, my lord?

*Ham.* Between who?

*Pol.* I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

*Ham.* Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward. 206

*Pol.* [*Aside*] (Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.) Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

*Ham.* Into my grave.

*Pol.* Indeed, that's out of the air. [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you. 216

*Ham.* You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

*Pol.* Fare you well, my lord.

*Ham.* These tedious old fools!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Pol.* You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

*Ros.* [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir! 223

[*Exit Polonius.*]

*Guil.* My honored lord!

*Ros.* My most dear lord!

*Ham.* My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do you both?

*Ros.* As the indifferent children of the earth.

*Guil.* Happy, in that we are not over-happy;  
On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

*Ham.* Nor the soles of her shoes?

*Ros.* Neither, my lord.

*Ham.* Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors? What's the news?

*Ros.* None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

*Ham.* Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither? 241

*Guil.* Prison, my lord!

*Ham.* Denmark's a prison.

*Ros.* Then is the world one.

*Ham.* A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

*Ros.* We think not so, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, then 'tis none to you; (for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so; to me it is a prison.)

*Ros.* Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind. 253

*Ham.* (O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.)

*Guil.* Which dreams indeed are ambition; (for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.)

*Ham.* A dream itself is but a shadow.)

*Ros.* Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow,

*Ham.* Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

266

*Ros.* }  
*Guil.* }      We'll wait upon you.

*Ham.* No such matter : I will not sort you with the rest of my servants ; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore ?

*Ros.* To visit you, my lord ; no other occasion.

*Ham.* Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks ; but I thank you : and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for ? Is it your own inclining ? Is it a free visitation ? Come, deal justly with me : come, come ; nay, speak.

*Guil.* What should we say, my lord ?

279

*Ham.* Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for ; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to color : I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

*Ros.* To what end, my lord ?

*Ham.* That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better

proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no. 291

*Ros.* [*Aside to Guildenstern*] What say you?

*Ham.* [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.— If you love me, hold not off.

*Guil.* My lord, we were sent for.

*Ham.* I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

*Ros.* My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

*Ham.* Why did you laugh then, when I said ‘man delights not me’? 318

*Ros.* To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you : we coted them on the way ; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

*Ham.* He that plays the king shall be welcome ; his majesty shall have tribute of me ; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target ; the lover shall not sigh gratis ; the humorous man shall end his part in peace ; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere ; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they ?

*Ros.* Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city. 332

*Ham.* How chances it they travel ? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

*Ros.* I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

*Ham.* Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city ? are they so followed ?

*Ros.* No, indeed, are they not.

*Ham.* How comes it ? do they grow rusty ?

*Ros.* Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wonted pace : but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for't : these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

*Ham.* What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

*Ros.* Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

359

*Ham.* Is't possible?

*Guil.* O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

*Ham.* Do the boys carry it away?

*Ros.* Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

*Ham.* It is not very strange; for my uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

371

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*]

*Guil.* There are the players.

*Ham.* Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with

you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outwards, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome : but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

380

*Guil.* In what, my dear lord ?

*Ham.* I am but mad north-north-west : when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

*Re-enter* POLONIUS.

*Pol.* Well be with you, gentlemen!

*Ham.* Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer : that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clouts.

387

*Ros.* Happily he's the second time come to them ; for they say an old man is twice a child.

*Ham.* I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir : o' Monday morning ; 'twas so, indeed.

*Pol.* My lord, I have news to tell you.

*Ham.* My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, —

*Pol.* The actors are come hither, my lord.

396

*Ham.* Buz, buz !

*Pol.* Upon my honor, —

*Ham.* Then came each actor on his ass, —

*Pol.* The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-



historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

*Ham.* O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou !

408

*Pol.* What a treasure had he, my lord ?

*Ham.* Why,

‘ One fair daughter, and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.’

*Pol.* [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

*Ham.* Am I not i’ the right, old Jephthah ?

*Pol.* If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

*Ham.* Nay, that follows not.

*Pol.* What follows, then, my lord ?

*Ham.* Why,

‘ As by lot, God wot,’

420

and then, you know,

‘ It came to pass, as most like it was,’ —  
the first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look, where my abridgement comes.

*Enter four or five Players.*

You are welcome, masters ; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend ! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last : comest thou to beard me in Denmark ? What, my young lady and mistress ! By’r lady, your ladyship

is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see : we'll have a speech straight : come, give us a taste of your quality ; come, a passionate speech. 436

*First Pl.* What speech, my good lord ?

*Ham.* I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted ; or, if it was, not above once ; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million ; 'twas caviare to the general : but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savory, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection ; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved : t'was *Æneas'* tale to Dido ; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter : if it live in your memory, begin at this line : let me see, let me see ; 454

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'—  
It is not so : it begins with 'Pyrrhus' :

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble

When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal ; head to foot 461  
Now is he total gules ; horridly trick'd  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,  
That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
To their lord's murder : roasted in wrath and fire,  
And this o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks.'

So, proceed you. 470

*Pol.* 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good  
accent and good discretion.

*First Pl.*

'Anon he finds him

Striking too short at Greeks ; his antique sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
Repugnant to command : unequal match'd,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage strikes wide ;  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top 480  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear : for lo ! his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick :  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing.

But as we often see, against some storm,  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below 490  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause  
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work ;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne,  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,  
In general synod take away her power ;  
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel, 500  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven  
As low as to the fiends !'

*Pol.* This is too long.

*Ham.* It shall to the barber's, with your beard.  
Prithee, say on : come to Hecuba.

*First Pl.* ' But who, O, who had seen the mobled  
queen — '

*Ham.* ' The mobled queen ! '

*Pol.* That's good ; ' mobled queen ' is good.

*First Pl.* ' Run barefoot up and down, threatening  
the flames

With bisson rheum ; a clout upon that head 510  
Where late the diadem stood ; and for a robe,  
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
A blanket in the alarm of fear caught up :  
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd

'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced :

But if the gods themselves did see her then,  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
The instant burst of clamor that she made,  
Unless things mortal move them not at all, 520  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,  
And passion in the gods.'

*Pol.* Look, whether he has not turned his color  
and has tears in's eyes. Prithee, no more.

*Ham.* 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest  
of this soon. Good my lord, will you see the players  
well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used,  
for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the  
time: after your death you were better have a bad  
epitaph than their ill report while you live. 530

*Pol.* My lord, I will use them according to their  
desert.

*Ham.* God's bodykins, man, much better: use  
every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping?  
Use them after your own honor and dignity:  
the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.  
Take them in.

*Pol.* Come, sirs.

*Ham.* Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-  
morrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the Players but  
the First.*] Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you  
play the Murder of Gonzago?

*First Pl.* Ay, my lord.

543

*Ham.* We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not ?

*First Pl.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Very well. Follow that lord ; and look you mock him not. [*Exit First Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night : you are welcome to Elsinore.

551

*Ros.* Good my lord.

*Ham.* Ay, so, God be wi' ye.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I !

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

That from her working all his visage wann'd ;

Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

560

With forms to his conceit ? and all for nothing !

For Hecuba !

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her ! What would he do,

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have ? He would drown the stage with tears

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

The very faculties of eyes and ears.

570

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

And can say nothing ; no, not for a king,

Upon whose property and most dear life

A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward ?

Who calls me villain ? breaks my pate across ?

Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face ?

Tweaks me by the nose ? gives me the lie i' the throat,

As deep as to the lungs ? who does me this ? 580

Ha ?

'Swounds, I should take it : for it cannot be

But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall

To make oppression bitter, or ere this

I should have fatted all the region kites

With this slave's offal : bloody, bloody villain !

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain !

O, vengeance !

Why, what an ass am I ! This is most brave,

That I, the son of a dear father murder'd, 590

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,

Must fall a-cursing, like a very drab,

A scullion !

Fie upon't ! foh ! About, my brain ! Hum, I have  
heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul that presently

They have proclaim'd their malefactions ;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father 601  
Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks ;  
I'll tent him to the quick : if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen  
May be the devil : and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me : I'll have grounds  
More relative than this. The play's the thing 610  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSEN-  
CRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* And can you, by no drift of circumstance,  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy ?

*Ros.* He does confess he feels himself distracted ;  
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

*Guil.* Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,  
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,  
When we would bring him on to some confession  
Of his true state.



*Queen.* Did he receive you well? 10

*Ros.* Most like a gentleman.

*Guil.* But with much forcing of his disposition.

*Ros.* Niggard of question, but of our demands  
Most free in his reply.

*Queen.* Did you assay him  
To any pastime?

*Ros.* Madam, it so fell out, that certain players  
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him,  
And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
To hear of it: they are about the court,  
And, as I think, they have already order 20  
This night to play before him.

*Pol.* 'Tis most true:  
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
To hear and see the matter.

*King.* With all my heart; and it doth much con-  
tent me  
To hear him so inclined.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

*Ros.* We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

*King.* Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;  
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here 30  
Affront Ophelia:  
Her father and myself, lawful espials,

Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,  
 We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
 And gather by him, as he is behaved,  
 If't be the affliction of his love or no  
 That thus he suffers for.

*Queen.* I shall obey you.

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
 That your good beauties be the happy cause  
 Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues <sup>40</sup>  
 Will bring him to his wonted way again,  
 To both your honors.

*Oph.* Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*]

*Pol.* Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please  
 you,

We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia*] Read on this  
 book;

That show of such an exercise may color  
 Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,—  
 'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage  
 And pious action we do sugar o'er  
 The devil himself.

*King.* [*Aside*] O, 'tis too true!

How smart a lash that speech doth give my con-  
 science!

50

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,  
 Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
 Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
 O heavy burthen!

*Pol.* I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Excunt King and Polonius.*]

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* To be, or not to be : that is the question :  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them ? To die : to sleep ; 60  
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep ;  
To sleep : perchance to dream : ay, there's the rub ;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause : there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life ;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, 70  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will, 80  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of ?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action. Soft you now !  
The fair Ophelia ! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.

*Oph.* Good my lord,

90

How does your honor for this many a day ?

*Ham.* I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

*Oph.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longed long to re-deliver;  
I pray you, now receive them.

*Ham.* No, not I;

I never gave you aught.

*Oph.* My honor'd lord, you know right well you  
did;

And with them words of so sweet breath composed  
As made the things more rich : their perfume lost,  
Take these again; for to the noble mind  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
There, my lord.

100

*Ham.* Ha, ha ! are you honest ?

*Oph.* My lord ?

*Ham.* Are you fair ?

*Oph.* What means your lordship ?

*Ham.* That if you be honest and fair, your honesty  
should admit no discourse to your beauty.

*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty? 110

*Ham.* Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

*Oph.* Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

*Ham.* You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

*Oph.* I was the more deceived. 120

*Ham.* Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven! We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father? 131

*Oph.* At home, my lord.

*Ham.* Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell. 132

*Oph.* O, help him, you sweet heavens!

*Ham.* If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague

for thy dowry : be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go : farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool ; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go ; and quickly too. Farewell.

143

*Oph.* O, heavenly powers, restore him !

*Ham.* I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't ; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit.*

*Oph.* O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword ;  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down !  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh ;  
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy : O, woe is me,  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

160

*Re-enter KING and POLONIUS.*

*King.* Love! his affections do not that way tend;  
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,  
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose 170  
Will be some danger: which for to prevent,  
I have in quick determination  
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,  
For the demand of our neglected tribute:  
Haply the seas and countries different  
With variably objects shall expel  
This something-settled matter in his heart,  
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?

*Pol.* It shall do well: but yet do I believe 180  
The origin and commencement of his grief  
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!  
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;  
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;  
But if you hold it fit, after the play  
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
To show his grief: let her be round with him;  
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear  
Of all their conference. If she find him not,  
To England send him, or confine him where 190  
Your wisdom best shall think.

*King.* It shall be so:  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.  
[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle.**Enter HAMLET and Players.*

*Ham.* Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

*First Pl.* I warrant your honor.

16

*Ham.* Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.



Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theater of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably. 36

*First Pl.* I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

*Ham.* O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them : for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered : that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. 46

[*Exeunt Players.*]

*Enter* POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord ! will the king hear this piece of work ?

*Pol.* And the queen too, and that presently.

*Ham.* Bid the players make haste. [*Exit Polonius.*]  
Will you two help to hasten them ? 51

*Ros.* } We will, my lord.  
*Guil.* }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

*Ham.* What ho ! Horatio !

*Enter* HORATIO.

*Hor.* Here, sweet lord, at your service.

*Ham.* Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
 As e'er my conversation coped withal.

*Hor.* O, my dear lord,—

*Ham.* Nay, do not think I flatter ;  
 For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
 That no revenue hast but thy good spirits  
 To feed and clothe thee ? Why should the poor be  
 flatter'd ?

60

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
 And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
 Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear ?  
 Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice  
 And could of men distinguish, her election  
 Hath seal'd thee for herself ; for thou hast been  
 As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing,  
 A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks : and blest are those  
 Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,  
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
 To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
 As I do thee. Something too much of this.

71

There is a play to-night before the king ;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death ;  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul 80  
Observe my uncle : if his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note ;  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgements join  
In censure of his seeming.

*Hor.* Well, my lord :  
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,  
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft. 90

*Ham.* They are coming to the play ; I must be  
idle :

Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN,  
POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDEN-  
STERN, and other Lords attendant, with the  
Guard carrying torches.*

*King.* How fares our cousin Hamlet ?

*Ham.* Excellent, i' faith ; of the chameleon's dish:  
I eat the air, promise-crammed : you cannot feed  
capons so.

*King.* I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet;  
these words are not mine.

*Ham.* No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say? 100

*Pol.* That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

*Ham.* What did you enact?

*Pol.* I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

*Ham.* It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready? 107

*Ros.* Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

*Queen.* Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

*Ham.* No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

*Pol.* [*To the King*] O, ho! do you mark that?

*Oph.* You are merry, my lord.

*Ham.* Who, I?

*Oph.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within's two hours.

*Oph.* Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord. 120

*Ham.* So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-

horse, whose epitaph is, 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'

*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.*

*Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly ; the Queen embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck : lays him down upon a bank of flowers : she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns ; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts : she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.*

*[Exeunt.*

*Oph.* What means this, my lord ?

129

*Ham.* Mary, this is miching mallecho ; it means mischief.

*Oph.* Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter Prologue.*

*Ham.* We shall know by this fellow : the players cannot keep counsel ; they'll tell all.

*Prol.* For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,

We beg your hearing patiently. [Exit.

*Ham.* Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring ?

*Oph.* 'Tis brief, my lord.

140

*Ham.* As woman's love.

*Enter two Players, King and Queen.*

*Pl. King.* Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round

Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,  
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen  
About the world have times twelve thirties been,  
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

*Pl. Queen.* So many journeys may the sun and moon

Make us again count o'er ere love be done !

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,

150

So far from cheer and from your former state,

That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,

Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must :

For woman's fear and love holds quantity ;

In neither aught, or in extremity.

Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know ;

And as my love is sized, my fear is so :

Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear ;

Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

*Pl. King.* Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too ;

160

My operant powers their functions leave to do :

And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,

Honor'd, beloved ; and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou —

*Pl. Queen.* O, confound the rest !  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast :  
In second husband let me be accurst !  
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

*Ham. [Aside]* Wormwood, wormwood.

*Pl. Queen.* The instances that second marriage  
move

Are base respects of thrift, but none of love : 170  
A second time I kill my husband dead,  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

*Pl. King.* I do believe you think what now you  
speak ;

But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth, but poor validity :  
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree ;  
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.

Most necessary ' tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt : 180

What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy :  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.

This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change ;

For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
 Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love. 190  
 The great man down, you mark his favorite flies ;  
 The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.  
 And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;  
 For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
 And who in want a hollow friend doth try,  
 Directly seasons him his enemy.  
 But, orderly to end where I begun,  
 Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
 That our devices still are overthrown :  
 Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own :  
 So think thou wilt no second husband wed ; 201  
 But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

*Pl. Queen.* Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven  
 light !

Sport and repose lock from me day and night !  
 To desperation turn my trust and hope !  
 An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope !  
 Each opposite that blanks the face of joy  
 Meet what I would have well and it destroy !  
 Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
 If, once a widow, ever I be wife ! 210

*Ham.* If she should break it now !

*Pl. King.* 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here  
 awhile ;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
 The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.]

*Pl. Queen.* Sleep rock thy brain ;



And never come mischance between us twain ! [*Exit.*

*Ham.* Madam, how like you this play ?

*Queen.* The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

*Ham.* O, but she'll keep her word.

*King.* Have you heard the argument ? Is there no offence in 't ? 220

*Ham.* No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest ; no offence i' the world.

*King.* What do you call the play ?

*Ham.* The Mouse-trap. Marry, how ? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna : Gonzago is the duke's name ; his wife, Baptista : you shall see anon ; 'tis a knavish piece of work : but what o' that ? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not ; let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung. 230

*Enter* LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

*Oph.* You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

*Ham.* I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

*Oph.* Still better, and worse.

*Ham.* So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer ; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come : 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

*Luc.* Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing ;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing ;

240

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property,  
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

*[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.]*

*Ham.* He poisons him i' the garden for his estate.  
His name's Gonzago : the story is extant, and written  
in very choice Italian : you shall see anon how the  
murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

*Oph.* The king rises.

*Ham.* What, frightened with false fire ?

250

*Queen.* How fares my lord ?

*Pol.* Give o'er the play.

*King.* Give me some light : away !

*All.* Lights, lights, lights !

*[Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.]*

*Ham.* Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play ;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep :  
Thus runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers — if the  
rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me — with two  
Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellow-  
ship in a cry of players, sir ?

262

*Hor.* Half a share.

*Ham.* A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself ; and now reigns here

A very, very — pajock.

*Hor.* You might have rhymed.

*Ham.* O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word  
for a thousand pound. Didst perceive ? 271

*Hor.* Very well, my lord.

*Ham.* Upon the talk of the poisoning ?

*Hor.* I did very well note him.

*Ham.* Ah, ha ! Come, some music ! come, the re-  
corders !

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music !

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Guil.* Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with  
you. 281

*Ham.* Sir, a whole history.

*Guil.* The king, sir,—

*Ham.* Ay, sir, what of him ?

*Guil.* Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

*Ham.* With drink, sir ?

*Guil.* No, my lord, rather with choler.

*Ham.* Your wisdom should show itself more richer  
to signify this to the doctor : for, for me to put him  
to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far  
more choler. 291

*Guil.* Good my lord, put your discourse into some  
frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

*Ham.* I am tame, sir : pronounce.

*Guil.* The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you. 296

*Ham.* You are welcome.

*Guil.* Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

*Ham.* Sir, I cannot.

*Guil.* What, my lord?

*Ham.* Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother you say,—

*Ros.* Then thus she says; your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

*Ham.* O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

*Ros.* She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

*Ham.* We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us? 318

*Ros.* My lord, you once did love me.

*Ham.* So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

*Ros.* Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

*Ham.* Sir, I lack advancement.

*Ros.* How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

*Ham.* Ay, sir, but 'While the grass grows,' — the proverb is something musty.

*Re-enter Players with recorders.*

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you: — why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil? 331

*Guil.* O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

*Ham.* I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

*Guil.* My lord, I cannot.

*Ham.* I pray you.

*Guil.* Believe me, I cannot.

*Ham.* I do beseech you.

*Guil.* I know no touch of it, my lord. 340

*Ham.* 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

*Guil.* But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

*Ham.* Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from

my lowest note to the top of my compass : and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe ? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

*Enter* POLONIUS.

God bless you sir !

*Pol.* My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

359

*Ham.* Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel ?

*Pol.* By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

*Ham.* Methinks it is like a weasel.

*Pol.* It is backed like a weasel.

*Ham.* Or like a whale ?

*Pol.* Very like a whale.

*Ham.* Then I will come to my mother by and by.  
[*Aside.*] They fool me to the top of my bent. — I will come by and by.

369

*Pol.* I will say so.

[*Exit Polonius.*]

*Ham.* 'By and by' is easily said. Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on. Soft ! now to my mother.  
O heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever

The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom :  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural :  
I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;  
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites ;  
How in my words soever she be shent,  
To give them seals never, my soul, consent ! [Exit.

380

SCENE III. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* I like him not, nor stands it safe with us  
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you ;  
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,  
And he to England shall along with you ;  
The terms of our estate may not endure  
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow  
Out of his lunacies.

*Guil.* We will ourselves provide :  
Most holy and religious fear it is  
To keep those many many bodies safe  
That live and feed upon your majesty.

10

*Ros.* The single and peculiar life is bound,  
With all the strength and armor of the mind,  
To keep itself from noyance ; but much more  
That spirit upon whose weal depends and rests  
The lives of many. The cease of majesty  
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw  
What's near it with it : it is a massy wheel,  
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things

Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls, 20  
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
 Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone  
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

*King.* Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;  
 For we will fetters put upon this fear,  
 Which now goes too free-footed.

<i>Ros.</i>	}	We will haste us.
<i>Guil.</i>		

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

*Enter* POLONIUS.

*Pol.* My lord, he's going to his mother's closet :  
 Behind the arras I'll convey myself,  
 To hear the process ; I'll warrant she'll tax him home :  
 And, as you said, and wisely was it said, 30  
 'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,  
 Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear  
 The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege :  
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,  
 And tell you what I know.

*King.* Thanks, dear my lord

[*Exit Polonius.*]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven ;  
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
 A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
 Though inclination be as sharp as will :  
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent ; 40  
 And, like a man to double business bound,



I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up ; 50  
My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder?'  
That cannot be ; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law : but 'tis not so above ; 60  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
Try what repentance can : what can it not?  
Yet what can it when one cannot repent?  
O wretched state ! O bosom black as death !  
O limed soul, that struggling to be free  
Art more engaged ! Help, angels ! make assay !  
Bow, stubborn knees ; and, heart with strings of  
steel, 70

Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe !

All may be well.

[*Retires and kneels.*]

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Now might I do it pat, now he is praying ;  
And now I'll do't : and so he goes to heaven ;  
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd :  
A villain kills my father ; and for that,  
I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
To heaven.

O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
He took my father grossly, full of bread, 80  
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;  
And how his audit stands who knows save Heaven ?  
But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
'Tis heavy with him : and am I then revenged,  
To take him in the purging of his soul,  
When he is fit and season'd for his passage ?  
No !

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent :  
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed ; 90  
At game, a-swearing, or about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in't ;  
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,  
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black  
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays :  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*]

*King.* [*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :

Words without thoughts never to heaven go. [*Exit.*

✱ SCENE IV. *The Queen's closet.*

*Enter* QUEEN and POLONIUS.

*Pol.* He will come straight. Look you lay home to him :

Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,  
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between  
Much heat and him. I'll sounce me even here.

Pray you, be round with him.

*Ham.* [*Within*] Mother, mother, mother !

*Queen.* I'll warrant you, fear me not. Withdraw,  
I hear him coming. [*Polonius hides behind the arras.*

*Enter* HAMLET.

*Ham.* Now, mother, what's the matter ?

*Queen.* Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

*Ham.* Mother, you have my father much offended.

*Queen.* Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

*Ham.* Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

*Queen.* Why, how now, Hamlet !

*Ham.* What's the matter now ?

*Queen.* Have you forgot me ?

*Ham.* No, by the rood, not so :

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;  
And—would it were not so !—you are my mother.

*Queen.* Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can  
speak.

*Ham.* Come, come, and sit you down; you shall  
not budge;

You go not till I set you up a glass

20

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

*Queen.* What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder  
me?

Help, help, ho!

*Pol.* [*Behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!

*Ham.* [*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a  
ducat, dead! [*Makes a pass through the arras.*]

*Pol.* [*Behind*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies.*]

*Queen.* O me, what hast thou done?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not: is it the king?

*Queen.* O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

*Ham.* A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,  
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

*Queen.* As kill a king!

*Ham.* Ay, lady, 'twas my word. 30

[*Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius.*]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.

Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,

And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

If damned custom have not brass'd it so

That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

*Queen.* What hath I done, that thou dar'est wag  
thy tongue

In noise so rude against me?

*Ham.*

Such an act

40

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows  
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed  
As from the body of contraction plucks  
The very soul, and sweet religion makes  
A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;  
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,  
With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
Is thought-sick at the act.

50

*Queen.*

Ay me, what act,

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

*Ham.* Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal  
To give the world assurance of a man:  
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,

60

And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
 You cannot call it love, for at your age  
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
 And waits upon the judgement: and what judgement <sup>70</sup>  
 Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,  
 Else could you not have motion; but sure that sense  
 Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,  
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
 But it reserved some quantity of choice,  
 To serve in such a difference. What devil was't  
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?  
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense 80  
 Could not so mope.

O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
 If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,  
 And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame  
 When the compulsive ardor gives the charge,  
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn  
 And reason pandars will.

*Queen.* O Hamlet, speak no more:  
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;  
 And there I see such black and grained spots 90  
 As will not leave their tinct. . . . .  
 . . . . . O speak to me no more;  
 These words like daggers enter in mine ears;  
 No more, sweet Hamlet.

*Ham.* A murderer and a villain ;  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
Of your precedent lord ; a vice of kings ;  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,  
And put it in his pocket !

*Queen.* No more !

*Ham.* A king of shreds and patches —

*Enter Ghost.*

Save me and hover o'er me with your wings, 100  
You heavenly guards ! What would your gracious  
figure ?

*Queen.* Alas, he's mad !

*Ham.* Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by  
The important acting of your dread command ?  
O, say !

*Ghost.* Do not forget : this visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But look, amazement on thy mother sits :  
O, step between her and her fighting soul : 110  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works :  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

*Ham.* How is it with you, lady ?

*Queen.* Alas, how is't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse ?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;

And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,  
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,  
Start up and stand an end. O gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look? 120

*Ham.* On him, on him! Look you, how pale he  
glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me;  
Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern effects: then what I have to do  
Will want true color; tears perchance for blood.

*Queen.* To whom do you speak this?

*Ham.* Do you see nothing there?

*Queen.* Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

*Ham.* Nor did you nothing hear?

*Queen.* No, nothing but ourselves.

*Ham.* Why, look you there! look, how it steals  
away!

My father, in his habit as he lived! 132  
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost.*]

*Queen.* This is the very coinage of your brain:  
This bodiless creation ecstasy  
Is very cunning in.

*Ham.* Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness  
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,



And I the matter will re-word ; which madness 140  
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass but my madness speaks :  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;  
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue ;  
For in the fatness of these pursy times 150  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,  
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

*Queen.* O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

*Ham.* O, throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.  
Good night : but go not to my uncle's bed ;  
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,  
That to the use of actions fair and good 160  
He likewise gives a frock or livery,  
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence : the next more easy ;  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either . . . the devil, or throw him out  
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night :  
And when you are desirous to be blest,

I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,  
[*Pointing to Polonius.*  
I do repent : but heaven hath pleased it so, 170  
To punish me with this and this with me,  
That I must be their scourge and minister.  
I will bestow him, and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
I must be cruel, only to be kind :  
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.  
One word more, good lady.

*Queen.*

What shall I do ?

*Ham.* Not this, by no means, that I bid you do :  
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed ;  
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse : 180  
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,  
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,  
Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madness,  
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know ;  
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,  
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,  
Such dear concernings hide ? who would do so ?  
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
Unpeg the basket on the house's top, 190  
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,  
To try conclusions, in the basket creep  
And break your own neck down.

*Queen.* Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,  
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe

What thou hast said to me.

*Ham.* I must to England; you know that?

*Queen.*

Alack,

I had forgot : 'tis so concluded on.

*Ham.* There's letters seal'd : and my two school-fellows,

Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd, 200

They bear the mandate ; they must sweep my way,  
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work ;

For 'tis the sport to have the enginer

Hoist with his own petar : and't shall go hard

But I will delve one yard below their mines,

And blow them at the moon : O, 'tis most sweet,

When in one line two crafts directly meet.

This man shall set me packing :

I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.

Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor 210

Is now most still, most secret and most grave,

Who was in life a foolish prating knave.

Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.

Good night, mother.

*[Exeunt severally; Hamlet dragging in Polonius.]*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and  
GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* There's matter in these sighs, these profound  
heaves :

You must translate : 'tis fit we understand them.  
Where is your son?

*Queen.* Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*Exeunt Rösencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night !

*King.* What, Gertrude ? How does Hamlet ?

*Queen.* Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend  
Which is the mightier : in his lawless fit,  
Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
Whips out his rapier, cries ' A rat, a rat ! ' 10  
And in this brainish apprehension kills  
The unseen good old man.

*King.* O heavy deed !

It had been so with us, had we been there :  
His liberty is full of threats to all ;  
To you yourself, to us, to every one.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd ?  
It will be laid to us, whose providence  
Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,  
This mad young man : but so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit ; 20  
But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone ?

*Queen.* To draw apart the body he hath kill'd :  
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shows itself pure ; he weeps for what is done.

*King.* O Gertrude, come away !

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,  
 But we will ship him hence : and this vile deed 30  
 We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
 Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern !

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

Friends both, go join with some further aid :  
 Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
 And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him :  
 Go seek him out ; speak fair, and bring the body  
 Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

*[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends ;  
 And let them know, both what we mean to do,  
 And what's untimely done . . . . . 40  
 Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,  
 As level as the cannon to his blank,  
 Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name  
 And hit the woundless air. O, come away !  
 My soul is full of discord and dismay. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter HAMLET.*

*Ham.* Safely stowed.

*Ros.* }  
*Guil.* } *[Within]* Hamlet ! Lord Hamlet !

*Ham.* But soft, what noise ? who calls on Hamlet ?  
 O, here they come.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*

*Ros.* What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

*Ham.* Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

*Ros.* Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence  
And bear it to the chapel.

*Ham.* Do not believe it.

*Ros.* Believe what?

10

*Ham.* That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

*Ros.* Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

*Ham.* Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you you shall be dry again.

21

*Ros.* I understand you not, my lord.

*Ham.* I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

*Ros.* My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

*Ham.* The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

*Guil.* A thing, my lord?

*Ham.* Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.

[*Excunt.*

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle.**Enter KING, attended.*

*King.* I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.

How dangerous is it that this man goes loose !  
Yet must not we put the strong law on him :  
He's loved of the distracted multitude,  
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes,  
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,  
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,  
This sudden sending him away must seem  
Deliberate pause : diseases desperate grown  
By desperate appliance are relieved, 10  
Or not at all.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ.*

How now ! what hath befall'n ?

*Ros.* Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

*King.* But where is he ?

*Ros.* Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your pleasure.

*King.* Bring him before us.

*Ros.* Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.

*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.*

*King.* Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius ?

*Ham.* At supper.

*King.* At supper ! where ?

19

*Ham.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten : a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet : we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots : your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table : that's the end.

*King.* Alas, alas !

*Ham.* A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

30

*King.* What dost thou mean by this ?

*Ham.* Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

*King.* Where is Polonius ?

*Ham.* In heaven ; send thither to see : if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

*King.* Go seek him there.     [*To some Attendants.*]

*Ham.* He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

*King.* Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve For that which thou hast done, must send thee hence With fiery quickness : therefore prepare thyself ; The bark is ready and the wind at help,



The associates tend, and every thing is bent  
For England.

*Ham.* For England?

*King.* Ay, Hamlet.

*Ham.* - Good.

*King.* So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

*Ham.* I see a cherub that sees them. But, come ;  
for England ! Farewell, dear mother. 51

*King.* Thy loving father, Hamlet.

*Ham.* My mother : father and mother is man and  
wife ; man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother.  
Come, for England ! [Exit.

*King.* Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed  
aboard ;

Delay it not ; I'll have him hence to-night :  
Away ! for every thing is seal'd and done  
That else leans on the affair : pray you, make haste.

*[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught — 60  
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,  
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red  
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe  
Pays homage to us — thou mayst not coldly set  
Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,  
By letters congruing to that effect,  
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;  
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,  
And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done,  
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. [Exit.

SCENE IV. *A plain in Denmark.*

*Enter* FORTINBRAS, *a Captain, and Soldiers marching.*

*Fort.* Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;  
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras  
Craves the conveyance of a promised march  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
If that his majesty would aught with us,  
We shall express our duty in his eye;  
And let him know so.

*Capt.* I will do't, my lord.

*Fort.* Go softly on.

*[Excunt Fortinbras and Soldiers.]*

*Enter* HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN,  
*and others.*

*Ham.* Good sir, whose powers are these?

*Capt.* They are of Norway, sir.

10

*Ham.* How purposed, sir, I pray you?

*Capt.* Against some part of Poland.

*Ham.* Who commands them, sir?

*Capt.* The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

*Ham.* Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,  
Or for some frontier?

*Capt.* Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole

20

A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

*Ham.* Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

*Capt.* Yes, it is already garrison'd.

*Ham.* Two thousand souls and twenty thousand  
ducats

Will not debate the question of this straw:

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without

Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir. 29

*Capt.* God be wi' you, sir. [Exit.

*Ros.* Will 't please you go, my lord?

*Ham.* I'll be with you straight. Go a little before.

[Exeunt all but Hamlet.

How all occasions do inform against me,

And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.

Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,

Looking before and after, gave us not

That capability and god-like reason

To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be

Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple 40

Of thinking too precisely on the event,

A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom

And ever three parts coward, I do not know

Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'

Sith I have cause and will and strength and means

To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:

Witness this army of such mass and charge

Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd  
Makes mouths at the invisible event, 50  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,  
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument,  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,  
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep? while to my shame I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men, 60  
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [*Exit.*]

SCENE V. *Elsinore. A room in the castle.*

*Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, and a Gentleman.*

*Queen.* I will not speak with her.

*Gent.* She is importunate, indeed distract :  
Her mood will needs be pitied.

*Queen.* What would she have ?

*Gent.* She speaks much of her father ; says she  
hears

There's tricks i' the world, and hems and beats her  
heart,  
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,  
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts; <sup>10</sup>  
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield  
them,  
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

*Hor.* 'Twere good she were spoken with; for she  
may strew  
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

*Queen.* Let her come in. *[Exit Gentleman.]*  
*[Aside]* To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss :  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 20

*Re-enter Gentleman, with OPHELIA.*

*Oph.* Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

*Queen.* How now, Ophelia !

*Oph.* *[Sings]*

How should I your true love know

From another one ?

By his cockle hat and staff,

And his sandal shoon.

*Queen.* Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song ?

*Oph.* Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

30

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

Oh, oh!

*Queen.* Nay, but, Ophelia,—

*Oph.* Pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] White his shroud as the mountain snow.—

*Enter KING.*

*Queen.* Alas, look here, my lord.

*Oph.* [*Sings*]

Larded with sweet flowers;

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true-love showers.

*King.* How do you, pretty lady?

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*Oph.* Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

*King.* Conceit upon her father.

*Oph.* Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,

All in the morning betime,

And I a maid at your window,

To be your Valentine.

*King.* How long hath she been thus? 50

*Oph.* I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [Exit.

*King.* Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit Horatio.

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies, 60  
But in battalions. First, her father slain :  
Next, your son gone ; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove : the people muddled,  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whis-  
pers,

For good Polonius' death ; and we have done but  
greenly,

In hugger-mugger to inter him : poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts :  
Last, and as much containing as all these,  
Her brother is in secret come from France ; 70  
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,  
Will nothing stick our person to arraign

In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places  
Gives me superfluous death. *[A noise within.]*

*Queen.* Alack, what noise is this?

*King.* Where are my Switzers? Let them guard  
the door.

*Enter another Gentleman.*

What is the matter?

*Gent.* Save yourself, my lord : 80  
The ocean, overpeering of his list,  
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste  
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord ;  
And, as the world were now but to begin,  
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
The ratifiers and props of every word,  
They cry ' Choose we : Laertes shall be king !'  
Caps, hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds :  
' Laertes shall be king, Laertes king !' 90

*Queen.* How cheerfully on the false trail they  
cry !

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs !

*King.* The doors are broke. *[Noise within.]*

*Enter LAERTES, armed ; Danes following.*

*Laer.* Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all  
without.

*Danes.* No, let's come in.



*Laer.* I pray you, give me leave.

*Danes.* We will, we will. [*They retire without the door.*]

*Laer.* I thank you : keep the door. O thou vile king,

Give me my father !

*Queen.* Calmly, good Laertes.

*King.* What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like ? 100  
Let him go, Gertrude ; do not fear our person :  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would,  
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,  
Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.  
Speak, man.

*Laer.* Where is my father ?

*King.* Dead.

*Queen.* But not by him

*King.* Let him demand his fill.

*Laer.* How came he dead ? I'll not be juggled  
with :

To hell, allegiance ! vows, to the blackest devil ! 110  
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit !  
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes ; only I'll be revenged  
Most throughly for my father.

*King.* Who shall stay you ?

*Laer.* My will, not at all the world :

And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
They shall go far with little.

*King.* Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,  
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and  
foe,

121

Winner and loser?

*Laer.* None but his enemies.

*King.* Will you know them then?

*Laer.* To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my  
arms;

And like the kind life-rendering pelican,  
Repast them with my blood.

*King.* Why, now you speak  
Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensibly in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgement pierce  
As day does to our eye.

130

*Danes.* [*Within*] Let her come in.

*Laer.* How now! what noise is that?

*Re-enter OPHELIA.*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!  
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,  
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

O heavens ! is't possible, a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life ?  
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,  
It sends some precious instance of itself  
After the thing it loves. 140

*Oph.* [*Sings*]

They bore him barefaced on the bier ;  
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny ;  
And in his grave rain'd many a tear,—

Fare you well, my dove !

*Laer.* Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade  
revenge,

It could not move thus.

*Oph.* [*Sings*] You must sing a-down a-down,

An you call him a-down-a. 150

O, how the wheel becomes it ! It is the false steward,  
that stole his master's daughter.

*Laer.* This nothing's more than matter.

*Oph.* There's rosemary, that's for remembrance ;  
pray, love, remember : and there is pansies, that's  
for thoughts.

*Laer.* A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

*Oph.* There's fennel for you, and columbines :  
there's rue for you ; and here's some for me : we  
may call it herb of grace o' Sundays : O, you must  
wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy : I  
would give you some violets, but they withered all  
when my father died : they say he made a good  
end,—

[*Sings*] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

*Laer.* Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favor and to prettiness.

*Oph.* [*Sings*] And will a' not come again?

170

And will a' not come again?

No, no, he is dead :

Go to thy death-bed :

He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll :

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan :

God ha' mercy on his soul !

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' you.

[*Exit.*

*Laer.* Do you see this, O God?

181

*King.* Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Do but apart,  
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me :  
If by direct or by collateral hand  
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,  
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,  
To you in satisfaction ; but if not,  
Be you content to lend your patience to us,  
And we shall jointly labor with your soul  
To give it due content.

190

*Laer.* Let this be so ;  
His means of death, his obscure funeral,

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,  
No noble rite nor formal ostentation,  
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
That I must call't in question.

*King* So you shall;  
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.  
I pray you, go with me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter HORATIO and a Servant.*

*Hor.* What are they that would speak with me?

*Serv.* Sea-faring men, sir: they say they have letters for you.

*Hor.* Let them come in. *[Exit Servant.*  
I do not know from what part of the world  
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

*Enter Sailors.*

*First Sail.* God bless you, sir.

*Hor.* Let him bless thee too.

*First Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir: it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

*Hor. [Reads]* 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we

put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldest fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, 30

HAMLET.'

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;  
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter KING and LAERTES.*

*King.* Now must your conscience my acquittance  
seal,  
And you must put me in your heart for friend,  
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,  
That he which hath your noble father slain  
Pursued my life.

*Laer.* It well appears: but tell me

Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
You mainly were stirr'd up.

*King.* O, for two special reasons;  
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinew'd, 10  
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his  
mother

Lives almost by his looks; and for myself —  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which —  
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
I could not but by her. The other motive,  
Why to a public count I might not go,  
Is the great love the general gender bear him;  
Who dipping all his faults in their affection,  
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone, 20  
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,  
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,  
Would have reverted to my bow again,  
And not where I had aim'd them.

*Laer.* And so have I a noble father lost;  
A sister driven into desperate terms,  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

*King.* Break not your sleeps for that: you must  
not think

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull

That we can let our beard be shook with danger  
 And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.  
 I loved your father, and we love ourself;  
 And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine —

*Enter a Messenger.*

How now! what news?

*Mess.* Letters, my lord, from Hamlet;  
 This to your majesty; this to the queen.

*King.* From Hamlet! who brought them?

*Mess.* Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:  
 They were given me by Claudio; he received them 40  
 Of him that brought them.

*King.* Laertes, you shall hear them.  
 Leave us. *[Exit Messenger.]*

*[Reads]* 'High and mighty, You shall know I am  
 set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg  
 leave to see your kingly eyes: when I shall, first ask-  
 ing your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of  
 my sudden and more strange return. HAMLET.'  
 What should this mean? Are all the rest come  
 back?

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

*Laer.* Know you the hand?

*King.* 'Tis Hamlet's character. 'Naked!'  
 And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.' 51  
 Can you advise me?

*Laer.* I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;  
 It warms the very sickness in my heart,



That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
'Thus didest thou.'

*King.* If it be so, Laertes —  
As how should it be so? how otherwise? —  
Will you be ruled by me?

*Laer.* Ay, my lord;  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

*King.* To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,  
As checking at his voyage, and that he means 61  
No more to undertake it, I will work him  
To an exploit now ripe in my device,  
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:  
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,  
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice  
And call it accident.

*Laer.* My lord, I will be ruled;  
The rather, if you could devise it so  
That I might be the organ.

*King.* It falls right.  
You have been talked of since your travel much, 70  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts  
Did not together pluck such envy from him  
As did that one, and that in my regard  
Of the unworthiest siege.

*Laer.* What part is that, my lord?

*King.* A very riband in the cap of youth,  
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears

Than settled age his sables and his weeds,  
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy : — 81  
I've seen myself, and served against, the French,  
And they can well on horseback ; but this gallant  
Had witchcraft in't ; he grew unto his seat,  
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,  
As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured  
With the brave beast : so far he topp'd my thought  
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,  
Came short of what he did.

*Laer.* A Norman was't ?

*King.* A Norman. 91

*Laer.* Upon my life, Lamond.

*King.* The very same.

*Laer.* I know him well : he is the brooch indeed  
And gem of all the nation.

*King.* He made confession of you,  
And gave you such a masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defence  
And for your rapier most especial,  
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed  
If one could match you : the scrimers of their nation,  
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye, 100  
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
Now, out of this —

*Laer.* What out of this, my lord !

*King.* Laertes, was your father dear to you ?  
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart ?

*Laer.* Why ask you this ?

*King.* Not that I think you did not love your father ;  
But that I know love is begun by time, 110  
And that I see, in passages of proof,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.  
There lives within the very flame of love  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it ;  
And nothing is at a like goodness still,  
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,  
Dies in his own too much : that we would do  
We should do when we would ; for this 'would' changes  
And hath abatements and delays as many  
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents ; 120  
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,  
That hurts by easing. But to the quick o' the ulcer :  
Hamlet comes back ; what would you undertake,  
To show yourself your father's son in deed  
More than in words ?

*Laer.* To cut his throat i' the church.

*King.* No place indeed should murder sanctuarize :  
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.  
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home :  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence 130  
And set a double varnish on the fame

The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together,  
 And wager on your heads : he, being remiss,  
 Most generous and free from all contriving,  
 Will not peruse the foils ; so that with ease,  
 Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
 A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice  
 Requite him for your father.

*Laer.*

I will do't :

And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.  
 I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
 So mortal that but dip a knife in it,  
 Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
 Collected from all simples that have virtue  
 Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
 That is but scratch'd withal : I'll touch my point  
 With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
 It may be death.

140

*King.*

Let's further think of this ;

Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
 May fit us to our shape : if this should fail,  
 And that our drift look through our bad performance,  
 'Twere better not assay'd : therefore this project  
 Should have a back or second, that might hold  
 If this did blast in proof. Soft ! let me see :  
 We'll make a solemn wager on your connings :  
 I ha't :

151

When in your motion you are hot and dry —  
 As make your bouts more violent to that end —  
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him

A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck, 160  
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

*Enter QUEEN.*

How now, sweet queen!

*Queen.* One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

*Laer.* Drown'd! O, where?

*Queen.* There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
There with fantastic garlands did she come  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name, 170  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:  
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;  
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up:  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element: but long it could not be 180  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

*Laer.* Alas, then she is drown'd?

*Queen.* Drown'd, drown'd.

*Laer.* Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,

And therefore I forbid my tears : but yet  
 It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,  
 Let shame say what it will : when these are gone,  
 The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord :  
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze, 190  
 But that this folly douts it. [Exit.

*King.* Let's follow, Gertrude :  
 How much I had to do to calm his rage !  
 Now fear I this will give it start again ;  
 Therefore let's follow. [Exeunt.

## ACT V.

### SCENE I. *A Churchyard.*

*Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.*

*First Clo.* Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation ?

*Second Clo.* I tell thee she is ; and therefore make her grave straight : the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

*First Clo.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence ?

*Second Clo.* Why 'tis found so.

*First Clo.* It must be 'se offendendo' ; it cannot be else. For here lies the point : if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act : and an act hath three branches ; it is, to act, to do, and to perform : argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

*Second Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,

*First Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water ; good : here stands the man ; good : if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes ; mark you that ; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself : argal, he that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

21

*Second Clo.* But is this law?

*First Clo.* Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

*Second Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

*First Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and grave-makers : they hold up Adam's profession.

32

*Second Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

*First Clo.* A'was the first that ever bore arms.

*Second Clo.* Why, he had none.

*First Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged : could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee : if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself —

40

*Second Clo.* Go to.

*First Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

*Second Clo.* The gallows-maker ; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

*First Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith : the gallows does well ; but how does it well ? it does well to those that do ill : now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church : argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come. 50

*Second Clo.* 'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter ?'

*First Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

*Second Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

*First Clo.* To't.

*Second Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, afar off.*

*First Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating ; and, when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker' : the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan : fetch me a stoup of liquor.

*[Exit Second Clown.]*

*[He digs, and sings]*

In youth, when I did love, did love,

62

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O, the time, for-a my behove,

O, methought, there-a was nothing-a meet.

*Ham.* Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making ?

*Hor.* Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.



*Ham.* 'Tis e'en so : the hand of little employment  
hath the daintier sense.

71

*First Clo.* [*Sings*]

But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil the land,  
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull.*]

*Ham.* That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing  
once : how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it  
were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder ! It  
might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now  
o'er-reaches ; one that would circumvent God, might  
it not ?

81

*Hor.* It might, my lord.

*Ham.* Or of a courtier ; which could say ' Good-  
morrow, sweet lord ! How dost thou, sweet lord ? '  
This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my  
lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it ;  
might it not ?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord.

88

*Ham.* Why, e'en so : and now my Lady Worm's ;  
chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a  
sexton's spade : here's fine revolution, an we had the  
trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the  
breeding, but to play at loggats with'em ? mine ache  
to think on't.

*First Clo.* [*Sings*]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet :  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

98

[*Throws up another skull.*]

*Ham.* There's another : why may not that be the skull of a lawyer ? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks ? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the scone with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery ? Hum ! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries : is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt ? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures ? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box ; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha ?

*Hor.* Not a jot more, my lord.

114

*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins ?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

*Ham.* They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah ?

*First Clo.* Mine, sir.

[*Sings*] O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

*Ham.* I think it be thine, indeed : for thou liest in't.

*First Clo.* You lie out on't sir, and therefore 'tis not yours : for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

*Ham.* Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine : 'tis for the dead, not for the quick ; therefore thou liest.

*First Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again from me to you. 131

*Ham.* What man dost thou dig it for ?

*First Clo.* For no man, sir.

*Ham.* What woman, then ?

*First Clo.* For none, neither.

*Ham.* Who is to be buried in't ?

*First Clo.* One that was a woman, sir ; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

*Ham.* How absolute the knave is ! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, this three years I have taken note of it ; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker ?

*First Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

*Ham.* How long is that since ?

*First Clo.* Cannot you tell that ? every fool can tell that : it was the very day that young Hamlet was born ; he that is mad, and sent into England. 132

*Ham.* Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

*First Clo.* Why, because a' was mad: a' shall recover his wits there; or, if a' do not, it's no great matter there.

*Ham.* Why?

*First Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

*Ham.* How came he mad?

160

*First Clo.* Very strangely they say.

*Ham.* How 'strangely'?

*First Clo.* Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

*Ham.* Upon what ground?

*First Clo.* Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

*Ham.* How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

*First Clo.* I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die, a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

171

*Ham.* Why he more than another?

*First Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now: this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

*Ham.* Whose was it?

*First Clo.* A mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

180

*Ham.* Nay, I know not.

*First Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue ! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

*Ham.* This ?

*First Clo.* E'en that.

*Ham.* Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio : a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy : he hath borne me on his back a thousand times ; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is ! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now ? your gambols ? your songs ? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar ? Not one now, to mock your own grinning ? quite chop-fallen ? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come ; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

*Hor.* What's that, my lord ?

200

*Ham.* Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' the earth ?

*Hor.* E'en so.

*Ham.* And smelt so ? pah ! [*Puts down the skull.*]

*Hor.* E'en so, my lord.

*Ham.* To what base uses we may return, Horatio ! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole ?

*Hor.* 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

*Ham.* No, faith, not a jot ; but to follow him

thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it : as thus : Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust ; the dust is earth ; of earth we make loam ; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel ?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away :

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw !

But soft ! but soft ! aside : here comes the king. 220

*Enter Priests, &c., in procession ; the corpse of Ophelia, LAERTES and Mourners following ;*  
KING, QUEEN, *their trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers : who is this they follow ?  
And with such maimed rites ? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life : 'twas of some estate.  
Couch we awhile, and mark.

*[Retiring with Horatio.]*

*Laer.* What ceremony else ?

*Ham.* That is Laertes, a very noble youth : mark.

*Laer.* What ceremony else ? 228

*First Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far  
enlarged

As we have warrantise : her death was doubtful ;  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet ; for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her :

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

*Laer.* Must there no more be done?

*First Priest.* No more be done:

We should profane the service of the dead  
To sing a requiem and such rest to her 240  
As to peace-parted souls.

*Laer.* Lay her i' the earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

*Ham.* What, the fair Ophelia!

*Queen.* Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

*[Scattering flowers.]*

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

*Laer.* O, treble woe 250  
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

*[Leaps into the grave.]*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,  
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

*Ham.* [*Advancing.*] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I, 261  
Hamlet the Dane. [*Leaps into the grave.*

*Laer.* The devil take thy soul!  
[*Grappling with him.*

*Ham.* Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,  
Yet have I something in me dangerous,  
Which let thy wisdom fear: hold off thy hand.

*King.* Pluck them asunder.

*Queen.* Hamlet, Hamlet!

*All.* Gentlemen,— 270

*Hor.* Good my lord, be quiet.  
[*The attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*]

*Ham.* Why, I will fight with him upon this theme  
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

*Queen.* O my son, what theme?

*Ham.* I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers  
Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

*King.* O, he is mad, Laertes.

*Queen.* For love of God, forbear him.

*Ham.* 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do: 280  
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear  
thyself?



Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?  
 I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
 To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
 Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
 And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
 Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
 Singeing its pate against the burning zone,  
 Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
 I'll rant as well as thou.

*Queen.* This is mere madness:  
 And thus awhile the fit will work on him; 291  
 Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
 When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
 His silence will sit drooping.

*Ham.* Hear you, sir;  
 What is the reason that you use me thus?  
 I loved you ever: but it is no matter;  
 Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
 The cat will mew and dog will have his day. [*Exit.*

*King.* I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.  
 [*To Laertes*] [*Exit Horatio.*  
 Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;  
 We'll put the matter to the present push. 301  
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
 This grave shall have a living monument:  
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
 Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A hall in the castle.**Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.*

*Ham.* So much for this, sir : now shall you see the other;

You do remember all the circumstance?

*Hor.* Remember it, my lord!

*Ham.* Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
That would not let me sleep : methought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly.  
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do pall : and that should learn us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends, 10  
Rough-hew them how we will,—

*Hor.* That is most certain.

*Ham.* Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,  
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew  
To mine own room again; making so bold,  
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal  
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,—  
O royal knavery ! — an exact command,  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons 20  
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,  
With, ho ! such bugs and goblins in my life,  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,  
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
My head should be struck off.

*Hor.* Is't possible?

*Ham.* Here's the commission: read it at more  
leisure.

But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

*Hor.* I beseech you.

*Ham.* Being thus be-netted round with villanies,—  
Or I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play,—I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair :  
I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
A baseness to write fair, and labor'd much  
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know  
The effect of what I wrote?

*Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

*Ham.* An earnest conjuration from the king,  
As England was his faithful tributary,  
As love between them like the palm might flourish,  
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,  
And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

*Hor.* How was this seal'd?

*Ham.* Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.  
I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal;  
Folded the writ up in the form of the other,

Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,  
The changeling never known. Now, the next day  
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

*Hor.* So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

*Ham.* Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

They are not near my conscience: their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation grow:

'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites.

*Hor.* Why, what a king is this!

*Ham.* Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now  
upon —

He that hath kill'd my king and stain'd my mother,  
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage — is't not perfect conscience,  
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be  
damn'd,

To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

*Hor.* It must be shortly known to him from England

What is the issue of the business there.

*Ham.* It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,

That to Laertes I forgot myself ;  
For, by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his : I'll court his favors :  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

*Hor.* Peace ! who comes here ? 80

*Enter OSRIC.*

*Osr.* Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

*Ham.* I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this waterfly ?

*Hor.* No, my good lord.

*Ham.* Thy state is the more gracious ; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile : let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess : 'tis a chough ; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt. 90

*Osr.* Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty

*Ham.* I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

*Osr.* I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

*Ham.* No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

*Osr.* It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

*Ham.* But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion — 101

*Osr.* Exceedingly, my lord ; it is very sultry, as 'twere, — I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head : sir, this is the matter —

*Ham.* I beseech you, remember —

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*[Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.]*

*Osr.* Nay, good my lord ; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes ; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing : indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see. 113

*Ham.* Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you ; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment I take him to be a soul of great article ; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more. 122

*Osr.* Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

*Ham.* The concernancy, sir ? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath ?

*Osr.* Sir ?

*Hor.* Is't not possible to understand in another tongue ? You will do't, sir, really.

*Ham.* What imports the nomination of this gentleman?  
130

*Osr.* Of Laertes?

*Hor.* His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

*Ham.* Of him, sir.

*Osr.* I know you are not ignorant —

*Ham.* I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

*Osr.* You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —  
139

*Ham.* I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

*Osr.* I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

*Ham.* What's his weapon?

*Osr.* Rapier and dagger.

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons: but, well.  
148

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

*Ham.* What call you the carriages?

*Hor.* I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

*Osr.* The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

159

*Ham.* The phrase would be more germane to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides : I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages ; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it ?

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed your three hits : he hath laid on twelve for nine ; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

171

*Ham.* How if I answer 'no' ?

*Osr.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

*Ham.* Sir, I will walk here in the hall : if it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me ; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

180

*Osr.* Shall I redeliver you e'en so ?

*Ham.* To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

*Osr.* I commend my duty to your lordship.

*Ham.* Yours, yours. [*Exit Osr.*] He does well to commend it himself ; there are no tongues else for's turn.



*Hor.* This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head. 189

*Ham.* He did comply with his dug before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out. 197

*Enter a Lord.*

*Lord.* My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

*Ham.* I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

*Lord.* The king and queen and all are coming down.

*Ham.* In happy time. 209

*Lord.* The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

*Ham.* She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*]

*Hor.* You will lose this wager, my lord.

*Ham.* I do not think so: since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the

odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart : but it is no matter.

*Hor.* Nay, good my lord,—

*Ham.* It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman. 220

*Hor.* If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestal their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

*Ham.* Not a whit ; we defy augury : there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come : the readiness is all ; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes ? Let be.

*Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, and Lords, OSRIC, and other Attendants with foils and gauntlets ; a table and flagons of wine on it.*

*King.* Come Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

*[The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.]*

*Ham.* Give me your pardon, sir : I've done you wrong ; 230

But pardon't as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd  
With sore distraction. What I have done,  
That might your nature, honor and exception  
Roughly awake, I hear proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes ? Never Hamlet :  
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,  
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,  
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it. 240  
Who does it then ? His madness : if't be so,  
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd ;  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.  
Sir, in this audience,  
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,  
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,  
And hurt my brother.

*Laer.* I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
To my revenge : but in my terms of honor 250  
I stand aloof, and will no reconcilment,  
Till by some elder masters of known honor  
I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungored. But till that time,  
I do receive your offer'd love like love,  
And will not wrong it.

*Ham.* I embrace it freely,  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.  
Give us the foils. Come on.

*Laer.* Come, one for me.

*Ham.* I'll be your foil, Laertes : in mine ignorance  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night, 260  
Stick fiery off indeed.

*Laer.* You mock me, sir.

*Ham.* No, by this hand.

*King.* Give them the foils, young Osrice. Cousin Hamlet,

You know the wager ?

*Ham.* Very well, my lord ;  
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

*King.* I do not fear it ; I have seen you both :  
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

*Laer.* This is too heavy, let me see another.

*Ham.* This likes me well. These foils have all a  
length ?

[*They prepare to play.*

*Osr.* Ay, my good lord.

270

*King.* Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
And in the cup an union shall he throw,  
Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,  
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin :  
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

280

*Ham.* Come on, sir.

*Laer.* Come, my lord. [*They play.*

*Ham.* One.

*Laer.* No.

*Ham.* Judgement.

*Osr.* A hit, a very palpable hit.

*Laer.* Well; again.

*King.* Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is  
thine;

Here's to thy health.

[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*]

Give him the cup.

*Ham.* I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.

Come. [*They play.*] Another hit; what say you?

*Laer.* A touch, a touch, I do confess. 290

*King.* Our son shall win.

*Queen.* He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good madam!

*King.* Gertrude, do not drink.

*Queen.* I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

*King.* [*Aside.*] It is the poison'd cup; it is too late.

*Ham.* I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

*Queen.* Come, let me wipe thy face.

*Laer.* My lord, I'll hit him now.

*King.* I do not think 't.

*Laer.* [*Aside.*] And yet it is almost against my con-  
science. 300

*Ham.* Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;  
I pray you, pass with your best violence;  
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

*Laer.* Say you so? come on. [*They play.*]

*Osr.* Nothing, either way.

*Laer.* Have at you now!

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*]

*King.* Part them; they are incensed.

*Ham.* Nay, come again. *The Queen falls.*

*Osr.* Look to the queen there, ho!

*Hor.* They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

*Osr.* How is't, Laertes?

*Laer.* Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,  
Osric; 310

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

*Ham.* How does the queen?

*King.* She swoonds to see them bleed.

*Queen.* No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear  
Hamlet,—

The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [Dies.]

*Ham.* O villany, Ho! let the door be lock'd:  
Treachery! Seek it out.

*Laer.* It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;  
No medicine in the world can do thee good;  
In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice  
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:  
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

*Ham.* The point envenom'd too!

Then, venom, to thy work. [Stabs the King.]

*All.* Treason! treason!

*King.* O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

*Ham.* Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,

Drink off this potion. Is thy union here? 330

Follow my mother. [King dies.]

*Lacr.* He is justly served;

It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me! [Dies.]

*Ham.* Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mates or audience to this act,

Had I but time — as this fell sergeant, death, 340

Is strict in his arrest — O, I could tell you —

But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;

Thou livest; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

*Hor.* Never believe it:

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:

Here's yet some liquor left.

*Ham.* As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, 350

Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story. [*March afar off, and shot within.*  
What warlike noise is this?

*Os.* Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from  
Poland,  
To the ambassadors of England gives  
This warlike volley.

*Ham.* O, I die, Horatio;  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:  
I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
But I do prophesy the election lights  
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice; 360  
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

*Hor.* Now cracks a noble heart. Good night,  
sweet prince:  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!  
Why does the drum come hither? [*March within.*

*Enter FORTINBRAS and the English Ambassadors,  
with drums, colors, and Attendants.*

*Fort.* Where is this sight?

*Hor.* What is it you would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

*Fort.* This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,  
That thou so many princes at a shot 370  
So bloodily hast struck?



*First Amb.* The sight is dismal ;  
And our affairs from England come too late :  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd.  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead :  
Where should we have our thanks ?

*Hor.* Not from his mouth,  
Had it the ability of life to thank you :  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England, 380  
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view ;  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about : so shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,  
Of death put on by cunning and forced cause,  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
Fall'n on the inventors' heads : all this can I  
Truly deliver.

*Fort.* Let us haste to hear it, 390  
And call the noblest to the audience.  
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune :  
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

*Hor.* Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :  
But let this same be presently perform'd,

Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mis-  
chance

On plots and errors happen.

*Fort.*

Let four captains

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;

400

For he was likely, had he been put on,

To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,

The soldiers' music and the rites of war

Speak loudly for him.

Take up the bodies : such a sight as this

Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies ;  
after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*]

# NOTES AND QUESTIONS.

## ACT I.

### *Scene I.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* The opening scene of the play is on the platform of the castle of Kronberg, which stands near Elsinore, on the island of Zealand, off the eastern coast of Denmark. From the middle to the back of the stage runs a low, thick wall; at the left of this, steps descend to the interior of the defenses; stretching to the right, is the platform, or broadening of the wall, flanked on its right by a battlemented parapet, higher than a man's head; far below it, one hears the subdued roar of the sea. At the back of the stage, running from left to right, is a somewhat higher battlemented wall, through which is cut a door leading to unseen portions of the castle. At the left and rear of the stage, and stretching far into the background, is the castle itself, with a massive tower at either end. Its front is flooded with moonlight, which throws into deep shadow the space before the wall at the back of the stage. On the platform, Francisco, a sentry, leans on his partisan, and gazes sorrowfully down at the sea, where it breaks upon the rocks. In the shadow of the rear wall approaches an armed man, casting furtive glances over his shoulder, as if he fears his footfalls may awaken the ghosts that prowl at the dark hour of midnight. Suddenly Francisco, shifting his position, accidentally lets his partisan come down with a clang on the firm stone beneath his feet; the approaching figure cries out in a startled voice, "Who's there?" The play begins.

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2. "Me" should be given a startling emphasis. Why? "Unfold yourself" is equivalent to "Give the countersign." The answer is in the next line.

6. Fancy that as Francisco finishes this short speech, the clock begins to strike; the two men stand silent while the twelve strokes are doled out, when Bernardo replies.

9. "I am sick at heart." As Francisco knows nothing of the appearance of the ghost, it is supposed that Shakespeare intended this speech to refer to the private griefs of the relieved guard, and to give the keynote to the play—a note of sadness.

13. "Rivals" is from *rivus*, stream, brook. As many families got their water from the same stream, they were rivals, or partners in the use of it. Can you conjecture how the word came to have its modern meaning?

15. Who is "the Dane"?

18. "Give you good night," a contraction of "God give you good night;" now contracted to what?

19. Why does Horatio speak jestingly? Line 30 will throw light upon the question.

21. Would it have been more effective if Shakespeare had written *ghost* instead of "thing"?

23. "Fantasy" means imagination.

31. Shakespeare makes soldiers speak like soldiers. What words in Bernardo's speech prove it?

33. What is Horatio's manner here?

39. Why did not Shakespeare let Bernardo finish his account of the former appearance of the ghost before allowing it to enter?

42. In Shakespeare's day a scholar was one who could speak Latin, in which language ghosts were exorcised.

46. By this time Horatio's manner has changed. When and how? Notice that he does not speak Latin. Why? The absence of scenery and proper costumes in the Shakesperean theater made it necessary for the poet to hint at, and often to describe, the scenes and the appearance of the characters. What word in Horatio's lines tells the dress of the ghost?

57. "Sensible . . . avouch" means a proof made manifest to the senses; in this case, to the sense of sight.

61. Scan the line.

62. "Parle," parley; related to what French word?

63. "Sledded Polacks," Poles who rode on sleds.

65. What does "jump" mean here?

67. Horatio means to say that though he does not know in what particular way, yet he believes the ghost's appearance forebodes some danger to the state; for, it was believed that the spirits of the dead never walked abroad without good reason. Explain "gross" and "scope."

70. "Good now," an exclamation probably equivalent to our "come now."

72. "Toils the subject of the land," makes the subjects of the land to toil.

74. "Mart," market.

75. "Impress," impressment.

77. "Toward," about to occur.

83. "Emulate," emulous.

87. "Well ratified, *etc.*" The compact was made in the proper legal form, and was ceremoniously announced by the heralds, thus being made doubly binding.

89. "Seized of," possessed of.

90. "Moiety competent," an equal part or amount.

91. "Had returned," would have returned. Is "returned" used in the usual sense?

94. "Carriage of the article designed," meaning of the agreement drawn up.

96. "Unimproved," unrestrained, or perhaps inexperienced.

98. "Shark'd," "gathered indiscriminately." (CLARK and WRIGHT.) Explain the figure. "Resolutes," resolute men.

100. "Stomach." The stomach was formerly supposed to be the seat of courage.

107. "Rommage," rummage; or perhaps from *room*.

112. If "mote" is emphasized, what is the meaning of the line? If "is" is emphasized, what is the meaning?

113. Does "state" mean condition or government? Are not this and the following lines of the speech suggestive of a passage in another play of Shakespeare's?

116. It is conjectured that a line has been omitted here, by mistake; hence the obscurity of the passage.

118. "Moist star," the moon. Why is it so called? The next line explains.

121. "Precurse," precursor, that which goes before as a warning.

122. "Harbinger;" in olden times, an officer who went ahead of the king when he traveled, to secure him a *harbor*, or lodging. He was usually accompanied by an officer called a purveyor, who provided food for the king and his retinue.

123. "Prologue" and "omen" have the same meaning; but here, "omen" means the portended disaster itself.

125. "Climatures," those who live in the same climate.

127. It was an ancient superstition that whoever crossed the path of a ghost would come under its evil influence. However, Fechter, a German actor, made the sign of the cross, at which action the ghost stopped.

129. What is the effect of the short line?

130. In this line and the rest of the speech, what old superstitions are involved? What in the stage direction, "*Cock crows*"?

138. Why does Horatio use the words, "they say"?

140. "Partisan," halberd, a combination of spear and battle-ax.

154. "Extravagant" and "erring" are used in the Latin sense — wandering.

155. Scan this line.

156. "Object," case, instance. "Probation," proof.

157. What word in this line is particularly well selected? Why?

160. The cock is generally called a fowl rather than a bird, and his cry is seldom called singing; why does Shakespeare so dignify him here?

162. "Strike," to exert a destructive influence.

163. "Takes," bewitches.

165. Would Marcellus or Bernardo have said, "and do in part believe it"?

166, 167. One of Shakespeare's beautiful descriptions of the coming of morn.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. One critic has said that this scene is unnecessary to the play. Can you show that it *is* necessary as an intro-

duction? 2. Is it weak as an introduction because Hamlet, the central figure of the play, does not appear? 3. Is it a good or a bad point that Hamlet is mentioned but once, and that at the end of the scene? 4. How soon in the scene does the interest begin? 5. What things in the scene make it interesting? 6. Which has the stronger dramatic effect, the first or the second appearance of the ghost? 7. Marcellus says that the ghost is "invulnerable;" it was therefore useless to strike at it; then what was Shakespeare's purpose in having him and Bernardo do so? 8. Which is the more dramatic, the beginning or the end of the scene? 9. Picture the movements and the actions of Bernardo and Francisco as the scene begins. 10. With what tones and gestures does Horatio express his disbelief? 11. Should the actors who take the parts of Bernardo and Marcellus endeavor to make the spirit of mystery and the supernatural brood over the scene before the appearance of the ghost? If so, with what tones, looks, movements? 12. Does this spirit pervade the whole scene? 13. Where should it be strongest? 14. Should the ghost move fast or slowly? 15. Should he walk in the shadow or in the moonlight, or both? 16. What should be his action when the cock crows? 17. Considering the very unmusical note of the cock, should its crowing be represented? 18. If you think so, show how it could be done without causing a laugh among the audience. 19. What difference of character appears in the three persons, Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo? 20. Which one changes tone, expression, and manner in the scene? Where and why? 21. What lines in the scene are most poetical? Why? 22. What are the most striking figures of speech?

### *Scene II.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* A great room in the castle. At the left and at the right, a staircase, with elaborately carved rails, ascends to a balcony, which runs the entire width of the room at the back, and which has a series of arches forming an arcade, with curtains, some drawn, some not. Before the stair at the left is a great wooden door, with iron hinges, fanciful iron ornaments, and great, heavy nail-heads. The walls here and all about the room are covered with wood intricately carved into twining foliage and writhing dragons. In the middle of the rear wall, under the balcony, is a high, double door, very wide, with curtains, which are parted, and hang in thick folds on either side. Two steps lead up to the hall into which the door opens. Near the front, at the left, is a curious chair, its back, like the woodwork on the walls, carved into foliage and dragons. At the right, placed diagonally, is a dais, on which are two throne chairs, of red and gold; and behind them rise two staffs, crossed at the middle, each bearing a triangular banner red as blood, and having the figure of a large black raven, the emblem of Denmark, in the center.

As the music begins, a procession enters headed by a double file of six soldiers, wearing helmets with nose-guards, and coats of chain mail,

and carrying long spears and round shields. The files divide and form a guard of three men on each side the door. Next come the king and the queen, in robes of royal scarlet and golden crowns. They are followed by the white-haired and white-robed Polonius, whose feeble steps are supported by a long staff. After him come his son Laertes, his daughter Ophelia, the courtiers Voltimand and Cornelius, and a company of lords and ladies,—the men clad in tunics; over these, gay mantles reaching to the knee, and girt about by brilliant sashes, from which their swords hang; they wear stockings which reach above the calf of the leg, leaving the knee bare; and high shoes, laced from the toe. The women are dressed in long robes of various interlacing patterns, bound about by sashes: the sleeves full; the long loose hair supported by gold bands about their heads. Last of all comes a lonely figure in funereal black — Hamlet.

The procession halts before the throne; the king and the queen ascend, the attendants arrange their long robes, they sit, and the court falls back into a decorous semi-circle, Polonius standing nearest the royal pair. Hamlet sinks into the great chair at the left. The king speaks.

4. "Contracted in one brow of woe." The king compares his people to a man whose brow is contracted into wrinkles because he is sorely troubled.

5. In what sense is "nature" used?

8. "Sometime," former.

10. "Defeated," sad.

11. "Auspicious," joyous; "dropping," tearful.

14, 15. "Barr'd, *etc.*," excluded, acted against your advice.

18. "Supposal," opinion.

21. The line means,—having no aid (colleague) but this supposed one.

24. "Bonds," any things that bind, as the law bound old Fortinbras in the case mentioned in the previous scene, lines 80 to 95.

31. "Gait," progress.

31, 32. "Levies," "lists," "full proportions," refer to the enlistment of soldiers.

33. "Subject." Where has this word already been used? and what is peculiar in its use?

38. "Delated," expanded, fully explained.

39. "Let your haste, *etc.*," let your haste show that you wish to do your duty.

44, 45. The idea is, You cannot make a reasonable request and be denied it. Scan line 45.

46. The king means that he would prefer to have the favor a free offering from himself rather than the granting of a request.

47. "Native," related.

48. "Instrumental," helpful.

56. "Pardon," permission.

60. What word in the line is especially appropriate in the mouth of a minister of state.



62. "Take thy fair hour," go when you like.
64. "Cousin," a more general word for relationship than now.
65. Explain the line. It has been conjectured that the word, "kin," is a play on the German word, "*Kind*," child. Does this seem likely? Does it change your explanation?
67. "Too much in' the sun." Many explanations of this expression have been made. Hamlet may mean that he is the son of the king rather than king, as he should be; Claudius had been elected to succeed the elder Hamlet; but Hamlet says later in the play that the election had been carried by fraud. It has been conjectured that there is a play on the words, "son" and "sun." If so, does this explanation hold?
68. "Nighted," black. The royal color in Denmark was red; the queen protests against Hamlet wearing black.
70. Scan the line.
- 70, 71. The actor must take hints from the lines as to the manner of the character he represents. What hint is there here?
73. In what sense is "nature" used here?
74. Can there be a double meaning in Hamlet's reply? Consider his next speech and his feeling toward his mother as shown throughout the play.
76. What are the most emphatic words?
79. Scan.
81. "Havior," for behavior.
87. Scan, accenting "commendable" on the first syllable. Note that sometimes the name of a person addressed is not counted in the number of feet.
90. What is the syntax of "lost" in the expression, "that father lost"?
92. "Obsequious," relating to obsequies. Scan the line, noting that the accent of one word has changed since Shakespeare's time.
93. Has "condolement" its modern meaning?
95. "Incorrect," rebellious.
99. Change the phraseology here to make it modern.
107. "Unprevailing," unavailing.
109. "Immediate," close. The king here announces that he wishes Hamlet to succeed him.
114. "Retrograde" was a term used in astrology; when the planets were going away from the earth's orbit, they sometimes exerted an unfavorable influence on human affairs.
120. It is noticeable that Hamlet answers his mother rather than the king; should "you," therefore, be emphasized?
124. "Sits smiling to my heart." Change this peculiar expression into some ordinary form. "Grace" means honor.
127. "Rouse" means the shouts of revelry that accompany drinking; "bruit" means to resound. Give syntax of both words. Remember the king's allusion to his drinking; it will be noticed hereafter.
129. Scan the line. Why is the word "too" repeated? What does the line mean? What do it and succeeding lines show as to



Hamlet's view of life? His mental condition should be noted carefully here, as it concerns all that follows.

132. Scan.

134. "Uses," habits, customs.

137. "Merely," entirely, completely.

140. Scan.

141. "Beteem," allow.

147. "Or" means before. Why use it when "ere" has the same meaning?

149. Scan. Salvini put a very natural touch into the reading of this line; he paused after "like," and seemed to be casting about in his mind for a suitable comparison.

150. "Discourse of reason" means simply reasoning power.

154. A critic has said that the queen's tears were not "unrighteous," but quite the contrary; and that Shakespeare probably wrote, "moist and righteous tears." Can you defend the text?

155. To *flush* is defined in two ways by different commentators,—to fill with water, and to turn red. Is there any choice between the two meanings?

157. "Dexterity," quickness.

163. "I'll change, *etc.*" There are several interpretations of this speech. If Hamlet has previously emphasized "friend," then what does it mean?

164. "What make you" means the same as the German phrase, *Was machen Sie?*

167, 168. In this speech Hamlet speaks to each of the three. Explain.

169. Horatio means that he is disposing of his time in truant fashion.

180. "Thrift, thrift." Should these words be read to indicate haste or economy? Which meaning would require a sarcastic tone? What old custom is alluded to in the rest of this line and the next?

182. "Dearest" is merely a superlative; it means greatest.

183. "Or" means before, as in line 147.

187. What is the most emphatic word? What does the emphasis imply?

192. "Season," modify, calm; "admiration," wonder.

198. "Vast," emptiness. Why is the line particularly poetical?

200. "At point," at all points; "cap-a-pe," cap-a-pied, from head to foot.

204. "Distill'd," probably melted, though the meaning is in doubt. Horatio means that they were so frightened that their flesh shook like jelly.

214. Is "you" or "speak" the emphatic word?

216. "It," its.

216, 217. "Address itself to motion, *etc.*" means, began to move as if it wished to speak.

231. Would it be well to put the comma after "he" instead of after "what"?

238. "Tell," count.

248. "Tenable," held.

254. "Your loves, *etc.*," a polite speech by which Hamlet means to treat with them as equals. Compare line 163.

256. "Doubt," suspect.

257, 258. What is the syntax of "to men's eyes"? What is the significance of the rime?

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. What essential step of the story is set forth in the scene? 2. What is the value of the first scene to the second? Reconsider the first question on the first scene. 3. Is the dramatic effect stronger or weaker for Hamlet not speaking until state business and the affairs of Laertes are disposed of? 4. In the first half of the scene, long speeches are the rule; in the second, short: is either half more dramatic, partly on this account? 5. What is the main reason for the superior dramatic quality of the stronger half? 6. How does the dramatist bind over the interest to the next scene? 7. Does it not seem that the king in his long speech is very careful about his rhetoric? What does this indicate as to his character and his state of mind? 8. Pick out his antitheses. 9. The German actor, Fechter, started when the king addressed him as "son" (line 64); why so? 10. Does not Hamlet emphasize a word in line 84 in order to reflect unpleasantly on some one present? Might not a sidelong glance of the eye make his meaning clear? 11. Explain Hamlet's manner and tone throughout this speech. Do they change at any place? 12. The speech beginning in line 129, Booth recited moving from side to side of the stage, once or twice flinging himself into his chair in an abandoned manner; show that the actor and the speech were in harmony. 13. Pick out two or three lines which, more than others, indicate Hamlet's state of mind. 14. In what way does his manner change when his friends enter? 15. How does Hamlet express in looks and manner the different degrees of friendship for the three men? 16. Suppose that before he speaks line 175, the sudden roar of a cannon is heard on the ramparts; does it not make the meaning of the next line more apparent? What, then, is the emphatic word in line 175? 17. What is Hamlet's tone and what the look in his eyes as he pronounces line 184? 18. Horatio's reply is sudden, perhaps full of fright; why? 19. Why does not Horatio's manner attract Hamlet's attention? 20. Some actors read the words, "Saw? who?" (line 190) suddenly, as if startled; Sir Henry Irving reads them in an abstracted manner, as if he barely heard. Show the reason for each manner and determine which is better. 21. If Irving is right, where does he first express surprise? 22. Macready has been criticised for reading the words, "Arm'd, say you?" too quickly after the speech before. Why? 23. What is Hamlet's manner and attitude in this part of the scene? 24. Why do the short questions and answers have so strong a dramatic effect? 25. Contrast Hamlet's manner in the early part of the scene with his manner in the speech beginning in line 244. 26. Does his manner change again after his friends depart? 27. If we consider a man's fate the resultant of two forces,—the state of his inner self and the circumstances that act upon him from without,—do we find

the seeds of Hamlet's tragedy in this scene? The answer should not be given hastily; perhaps we have not learned all of his inner self nor all of the circumstances that environ him. Come back to the question after finishing the play.

*Scene III.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* A quaint room in the house of Polonius. At the back of the stage a large door opens upon a balcony, whose railing may be seen, and beyond this a few trees and a prospect of field and hill. On each side the door, high up from the floor, is a semi-circular window. The walls are bare stone. In the middle of the room is a table, with legs and cross-supports of roughly carved wood. On the table a few large vellum-bound books, and at each end of it a rude bench. In the farther corners are a few chairs with high backs, elaborately carved, and uncomfortable; at each side a door. Ophelia sits on one of the benches, disconsolately leaning upon the table, her chin supported in her hand. Behind her, bending to caress her, stands Laertes.

3. "Convoy," conveyance, means of sending a letter.

6. "Fashion," that which is fickle, changeable; "toy," a mere pastime. Laertes wishes his sister to think that Hamlet has no other intention than a flirtation.

7. "Primy," early, youthful.

9. "Suppliance of a minute;" the meaning is doubtful: perhaps that which is supplied for a minute.

10. "Crescent," growing, increasing.

12. "Temple," the body. Laertes continues to warn his sister against her royal lover, whose mind, he says, may change as he grows older.

15. "Cautel," deceit.

16. Is "virtue" used in the sense of power or of goodness?

19. "Unvalued," of no rank.

20. "Carve," choose.

21. "Safety" has three syllables; scan the line.

25-27. Laertes means,—You may believe him if, in his position as prince ("particular act and place"), he may marry you; otherwise, not.

30. "Credent," credible.

32. "Unmaster'd," uncontrolled.

34. Do not show as much affection as you feel.

36. "Chariest," most careful, cautious.

39. "Canker," a worm that feeds on buds—"the infants of the spring,"

40. "Buttons," buds; "disclosed," opened.

42. "Blastments," blights.

44. Laertes means,—A young person does not like to restrain his feelings, and yields to them even when there is no other tempter than they.

47. "Ungracious," graceless, wicked.

49. "Puff'd," bloated with dissipation.  
 50. "Primrose path;" compare the porter's speech in Macbeth, Act II, Scene 3,— "The primrose way to the everlasting bonfire."  
 51. "Recks," observes; "rede," advice.  
 56. "Sits," a sailor's word.  
 57. "Stay'd for," waited for.  
 59. "Character," write. Scan the line.  
 60. "Unproportion'd," inappropriate, unsuitable.  
 61. "Vulgar," — in the Latin sense, common.  
 62. "Adoption," acquaintance.  
 64, 65. Do not be too keen to make intimate acquaintance with every one you meet, for by so doing you will teach people to value your friendship lightly.  
 69. "Censure," opinion.  
 71. "Not express'd in fancy," not conspicuous in color and design.  
 73, 74. The people of rank in France show the very best taste in this respect (modesty of dress).  
 77. "Husbandry," economy.

In this speech of Polonius, Shakespeare is said to have imitated, for the sake of ridicule, Lyly's *Euphues*, a book that was very popular in his time; so much so that it gave rise to the term *Euphuism*, which is a high-flown affected style, abounding in figures, especially antitheses, and often burdened with commonplace wisdom. Later in the play, in the conversation between Hamlet and Osric, the poet ridicules *Euphuism* mercilessly. The following quotation will serve for an illustration in the present case:—

"Be merry, but with modestie: be sober, but not too sullen: be valyaunt, but not too venterous. Let thy attyre bee comely, but not costly: thy dyet wholesome, but not excessiue: vse pastime as the word importeth to pass the time in honest recreation. Mistrust no man without cause, nether be thou credulus without prooffe: be not lyght to follow euery mans opinion, nor obstinate to stande in thine owne conceipt."

90. "Marry," an oath upon the name of the Virgin.  
 94. "Put on me," told me.  
 102. "Unsifted," untried, inexperienced.  
 108. "To crack the wind of the poor phrase," means to misuse it or to twist it out of its real meaning.

In this speech and that of Ophelia in line 99, point out the varying meaning of "tender."

110. Scan.  
 112. "Go to," equivalent to *come, come*; or the vulgar expression, *get out*.  
 115. The woodcock was supposed to be a very simple bird, and very easily caught with springes, snares.  
 116. "Prodigal," for prodigally.  
 121. "Something," somewhat.  
 122. The sentence means,— Set a higher value upon your company

("entreatments") than to stop and talk whenever Hamlet bids you do so.

126. "In few," in short.

127. "Brokers," go-betweens.

128. "Dye," color; "investments," dress.

133. "Slander," disgrace; "moment," moment's.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. What new thread of the story begins in this scene? 2. Does the scene interrupt the story? 3. If so, is the interruption a blemish? 4. How does the scene compare in dramatic effect with the preceding one? 5. What is Ophelia's manner when she says, "No more but so" (line 10)? 6. Is Laertes hard in his manner toward Ophelia, or tender? 7. Laertes speaks very curtly when he says, "O, fear me not" (line 51); why? 8. What is Laertes's action when he receives his father's blessing? 9. What is the manner of Polonius when he says, "What is't, Ophelia, etc." (line 88)? And Ophelia's in her reply? 10. In the following speeches of Polonius, does he treat her as a child or a woman? 11. Picture Ophelia's attitude, expression, and tone in her last speech, "I shall obey, my lord." 12. What impression does the scene give of the character of Laertes? 13. In Ophelia's speech beginning in line 45, does she seem a child or a woman? 14. Why did Laertes make so brief a reply? 15. Does the long list of "precepts" which Polonius gives to Laertes, seem to have been learned from experience or from books? 16. Distinguish between a precept and a principle, and find one principle among the many precepts. 17. In Mr. Sothorn's recent presentation of "Hamlet," Ophelia slyly reads a letter (presumably from Hamlet) as Polonius pronounces the speech beginning in line 90, and appears not to listen. As he says, "Give me up the truth," he snatches the letter from her; whereupon she pouts. Is this "stage business" true to her character?

#### *Scene IV.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* The same as Scene I. and as then — Night.

1. "Shrewdly," keenly.

2. "Eager," sharp.

8. "Wake," to hold revel; "rouse;" see Scene II, line 127.

9. "Wassail," drinking bout. "Swaggering up-spring reels;" several explanations are given, the best one being that the "up-spring" was the wildest of German dances—a good picture this, of the king and his court in a night of revel.

15. "Manner;" if the word *manor* be substituted, is the sense changed?

16. The line means,—It is more honorable not to observe the custom than to observe it. The sentence is of course a paradox.

17. What word in the line is especially well selected? What does the expression, "east and west," modify?

18 "Tax'd," censured.

19. "Clepe," call.

19, 20. "With swinish phrase, *etc.*," speak evil of us by calling us swine. It has been conjectured that Shakespeare may have intended a pun on the name of Sweyn, which many kings of Denmark had borne.

20-22. The sentence means, — The reputation of drinking too much detracts from the reputation of our deeds, though they be performed in the best possible manner.

24. "Mole," blemish.

27. "Complexion," temperament. There were four temperaments or complexions — the sanguine, the melancholy, the choleric and the phlegmatic. These four words are particularly good for philologic study.

30. "Plausive," pleasing. It will be easier to understand this very much involved sentence if the words *it happens* be inserted before "that."

32. "Nature's livery," an accidental or natural defect; "star" is understood as scar.

34. "Undergo," experience.

35. "Censure," see Scene III, line 69.

36. "Dram of eale," is not understood; it is doubtless a misprint, perhaps for *evil*. Hamlet's thought is that a man of excellent qualities may lose character by one serious fault.

40. "Spirit of health," one who has been saved, who brings "airs from heaven."

43. "Questionable shape;" it is Hamlet's father's ghost, and there fore may be questioned by him.

47. "Canonized," buried according to the canon. Scan.

52. "Determine whether "dead," which seems redundant, adds anything to the idea. Scan the line.

54. "Fools of nature;" nature keeps us as fools to amuse her, just as nobles kept fools to amuse them.

55. "Disposition," nature.

59. "Impartment," message.

66. What is the most emphatic word?

71. What word in the line is especially well selected?

73. "Sovereignty," command.

75. "Toys," freaks.

83. Scan.

85. "Lets," hinders. What word is most emphatic?

89. "Have after," let's go after him.

91. What is the antecedent of "it"?

91. Marcellus means, — Let *us* direct it.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. What is the reason of the intense interest of the scene? 2. Why does the scene open with apparently unnecessary conversation about the cold night? 3. Is the noise of trumpets and the firing of cannon effective, or does it seem too startling an interruption to the intense and mysterious silence? 4. Should the roar of the cannon be near at hand or in some remote part of the castle?



5. Why does Shakespeare put a long speech into the mouth of Hamlet here—one that does not concern the appearance of the ghost? 6. Would the dramatic effect be increased if Hamlet, in the beginning of the scene, look about frequently as if expecting the ghost? 7. If so, should this watchfulness be kept up through the long speech preceding the entrance of the ghost? 8. Describe the grouping of the characters as the ghost enters, and picture the manner of Horatio as he says, "Look, my lord, it comes." 9. With what manner, look, and tone does Hamlet pronounce line 39? 10. From Shakespeare's time to the present day, the actors who have played the part of Hamlet have made a long pause after this line; why? 11. What reason for fear has Hamlet besides the mere seeing of a ghost? 12. As Hamlet proceeds in the speech his fear decreases, giving way to another emotion; what is it? How do his tone and manner change? 13. Formerly every Hamlet on breaking away from Horatio and Marcellus, drew his sword, pointed it at the ghost, and thus followed it out; Kemble changed this, first drawing his sword upon his friends as he says, "By heaven, *etc.*" (line 85), then "drooping the weapon after him" (see FURNESS), and extending his left hand toward the ghost, followed. Show that this was an improvement. 14. What is there in the scene to indicate what Hamlet thought of the king? 15. In Hamlet the critics think that Shakespeare intended to show a man whose intellect was much stronger than his will, who could think much better than he could act; what speech in the scene shows his intellectual power? 16. Does Hamlet show any lack of will in the scene? 17. Notice that in the speech, "My fate cries out" (line 81), Hamlet seems to think that some power outside of and above himself puts strength into his body; keep this in mind through the play, and see whether the idea is carried to the end. 18. What parts of the scene appeal most strongly to the emotions and the imagination? Does not this quality make them poetry?

### Scene V.

*Suggestion of Scene.* Owing to the expense of preparing many stage settings, this scene is usually the same as the first; but we may shift it to the front of the castle, whence we see, along the rear of the stage, a battlemented parapet, and between it and us, a broad stone-paved space. Beyond the parapet, the cold wintry sky, the moon occasionally peering from between the clouds.

6, 7. In what sense does Hamlet use the word, "bound"? In what sense does the ghost take it?

10. Scan.

16. What word does the scansion make unusually forcible?

19. "An" has the effect of on.

21. "Eternal blazon;" "blaze" was formerly used in western America to mean the cutting of notches on trees, in order to mark a path

through the woods. Hence it means to mark, to inform, to make public. "Eternal" refers to eternity — future life; the ghost will not tell to a mortal the horrors of hell.

31. What is the strongest word in the line ?

32, 33. The "fat weed" is probably the asphodel, which the Greek poets say grew in the realm of shades. "Lethe," a river in Hades; Milton calls it "the river of oblivion." "Wharf," for bank.

37. "Forged process," false account.

50. "Decline," sink down.

61. Scan. Meaning of "secure" ?

62. "Hebanon," henbane.

64. "Leperous" is explained in the description of the effect of the "distilment."

68. "Posset," curdle. Scan.

69. "Eager," sour.

71. Explain "instant" and "bark'd."

72. "Lazar-like," like a leper.

73. What is the effect of the short line ?

77. "Unhousel'd," without taking the sacrament; "disappointed," unappointed, unprepared; "unaneled," without the holy oil.

81. Meaning of "nature" ?

90. "Uneffectual fire," fire that pales because of the coming of morning. It was an ancient belief that ghosts disappeared when the day dawned.

98. "Table," tablet.

99. "Fond," foolish. Scan.

100. "Saws," maxims; "forms," perhaps rules; "pressures," impressions, as those of a seal in wax.

105. Another short line; why?

106. Hamlet thinks of the king's smiling when he called him son.

107. "Tables;" the tables, or tablets, carried by scholars in ancient times, were made of slate or ivory, and had several leaves.

115. Does "it" refer to Horatio's "Heaven secure him," or to Hamlet's oath?

115, 116. "Hillo, *etc.*," is the cry the falconer uses to recall his hawks.

127. Meaning of "circumstance" ?

136 and 138. Explain the turn on the word "offence."

139. Meaning of "honest" ?

148. In olden times it was customary to swear upon swords because they had cross-hilts. "Already" refers to "in faith," the oath already sworn.

150. "Truepenny." One critic (Upton) explains that in the old morality plays, vice was accustomed to jest with the devil in several set expressions, as "Ah, ha, boy, are you there?" The audiences of Shakespeare's time readily understood the allusion. The meaning of "truepenny" is plain enough; Hamlet has already said that the ghost was "honest."



156. "Hic et ubique," a phrase taken from the ceremonies of conjurers.

163. "Pioner," pioneer, an attendant of armies who dug trenches and performed other duties not assigned to soldiers.

166, 167, Remember Horatio's disbelief in the first scene.

172. "Antic disposition," assumed manner. Here begins the question of Hamlet's madness or pretended madness.

174. "Encumber'd," folded; as one folds his arms when he pretends that he knows much more than he is willing to tell.

186. "Friending," friendliness.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. Up to this time curiosity has been excited as to what is the motive of the play; show that this motive is now revealed. 2. Describe the tone and the manner of the ghost. 3. What should be the physical appearance of the actor who takes the part? 4. What is Hamlet's tone when he says, "Alas, poor ghost"? 5. What effect has the word "revenge" upon the audience? 6. The same effect is wrought upon Hamlet: what tone and manner expresses it? 7. In the beginning of the scene, Hamlet's refusal to go farther leads us to believe he is becoming somewhat afraid of the ghost; if so, where does his fear disappear? 8. "Murder" (line 25) has the same effect as "revenge;" what is it? 9. Would you describe Hamlet's speech beginning in line 29 as resolute or irresolute? 10. In line 40, Hamlet says he has suspected his uncle of murdering his father; how long has he held this suspicion? 11. Describe the ghost's general tone in the long speech beginning in line 42, and say where and how it changes. 12. After the exit of the ghost, Hamlet seems to be a changed man; how? 13. What gesture accompanies line 97? 14. Would you describe the speech beginning in line 92 as resolute or irresolute? 15. If the former, why does not Hamlet go at once and kill the king? 16. This speech has been described as hysterical; is it so, and why? 17. What is Hamlet's action as he writes on his tables? 18. Explain why Hamlet speaks in so frivolous a manner when his friends return (line 116): does not the scene become grotesque here? 19. Explain a sudden change in Hamlet's manner in lines 121, 122, and 123. 20. Explain a more marked one in lines 124 and 126; what is the manner of Horatio's reply? 21. Hamlet's hysterical manner, if such it may be called, returns in the part of the scene in which he holds his sword, hilt up, for his friends to swear upon, while the ghost from beneath the platform, in a long-drawn tone, says, "Swear;" why? Perhaps it is asking the same question to say,—Why does Hamlet speak so disrespectfully of and to his father's ghost? 22. Most Hamlets fold their arms and look wise and mysterious when they pronounce lines 174 to 179; Irving links his arms into those of his friend's in a confidential manner: which way do you like better? 23. With the words, "Rest, rest, etc." (line 183), Hamlet's manner changes: how and why? 24. Explain the action that accompanies the last line of the scene. 25. In line 172 Hamlet says he may in the future "put an antic disposition on"

(see note). One explanation of his purpose is that he may thereby conceal from the king the true reason for his sadness and thus plot his revenge in safety; another, that he may cause his friends to think that his "wild and whirling words" and his extremely excited manner were put on, although in reality he had lost his self-control; a man does not like to be caught in too violent a display of emotion. Which of these explanations is the better? 26. Hamlet's character is explained as one in which power to feel and to think are so great that his power to act is overcome; his inward tumult is so great that he cannot do what he wishes to do: consider whether he falls into this state in this scene. 27. What line in the speech beginning in line 126, shows that he is a man whose habit it is to think every subject over carefully, looking at it on all sides? 28. Is there anything in the scene that indicates that Hamlet has become insane?

*Questions on the Act.* 1. Shakespeare usually divides his plays into five divisions, or steps, each corresponding to an act; what step of the story is set forth in this act? 2. What thought near the end of the last scene expresses Hamlet's own point of view of the situation in which he finds himself? 3. Do you detect any fatalism in this speech or elsewhere in the act? 4. Is there any scene in the act that could be spared or shortened? 5. "Hamlet" is said to be a tragedy of thought rather than of action; does it appear so up to this point?

## ACT II.

### Scene I.

*Suggestion of Scene.* The same as that of Act I, Scene III.

7. "Danskens," Danes.
8. "Keep," dwell.
10. "Encompassment and drift," roundabout manner.
12. "Particular demands," direct questions.
20. "Forgeries," false accusations; "rank," gross, bad.
28. "Season," modify, explain.
31. "Quaintly," artfully.
32. "Taints of liberty," such taints or faults as are naturally acquired by young men who are not restrained by home or other good influences.
34. "Unreclaimed," untamed.
35. "Of general assault," such as attack, or "assault" youth in general.
38. "Fetch of warrant," a justifiable, or perhaps, effectual, trick.
40. The line means, As if he were but slightly blemished by his wild life.
42. "Converse," conversation.
43. "Prenominate," named, or mentioned before:
45. The line means, — He will follow up your remarks thus.
47. "Addition," title. Where is the word used before?

58. "O'ertook in's rouse," perhaps drunk, overcome by drink.  
 63. Explain the figure.  
 64. "Of reach," of far-sight.  
 65. "Windlasses," roundabout ways; "assays of bias," indirect methods; figure from the game of bowls, in which the player twists the ball, making it go in a curve.  
 66. "Indirections," again — indirect methods.  
 71. Meaning of the line?  
 73. If Polonius speaks figuratively, what does he mean?  
 78. "Unbraced," unfastened.  
 80. "Down-gyved," fallen down to his ankle, and thus resembling gyves, or fetters.  
 102. "Ecstasy," madness.  
 103. "Foredoes," destroys.  
 112. "Quoted," observed.  
 113. "Beshrew my jealousy," curse my suspicion.  
 114-119. Polonius means,—It is as natural for old men to be too suspicious as for young men to be too unsuspicious.  
 118-119. Polonius means,—It will cause more trouble to conceal the secret of Hamlet's love and consequent madness than it will to reveal it.  
*Questions on the Scene.* 1. Is any idea set forth in the scene that is necessary to the story? 2. Is anything gained from the fact that this scene is much less dramatic than the last one in the first act? 3. Describe Ophelia's manner as she enters, and as she tells her story to her father.  
 4. Contrast the manner of Polonius as he speaks to Reynaldo with his manner to Ophelia, as he says, "With what, i' the name of God?" (line 76). 5. What notion of a young man's morals does Polonius hold?  
 6. What expressions, sometimes repeated—and with a wise shake of the head, no doubt—show Polonius to be a very pedantic old man?  
 7. In what speeches does he show what he fancies to be the most profound and impressive wisdom? 8. In what lines is he very euphuistic?

### Scene II.

*Suggestion of Scene.* A room in the castle, the walls and ceiling ornamented with carved wood. In the rear a great blazing fireplace, with hearth before it, at each side of which a heavy bench, without a back. Above the fireplace two crossed spears bearing the red flag with the black raven for a center; between, a small round shield. On the walls are fastened shields, bows, arrows, swords, and armor. In one corner a harp. At the left, near the front, is a great heavy table with stools about it, and one large chair with arms and high back; on the table a pile of great books and an ink horn.

2. "Moreover that," beside that.  
 5. Scan.  
 6. "Sith nor," since neither.  
 12. "Neighbor'd to," associated with.

18. "Open'd," revealed.
24. "Supply and profit," aid and furtherance.
30. "Bent," a figure from the bending of a bow; it means the utmost degree.
38. "Practices," the means the two men are to use to discover the secret of Hamlet's changed behavior.
42. "Still," ever.
52. "Fruit," dessert.
56. "Main," main cause.
60. "Desires," that is, for the king's good health.
61. "Our first," our first audience.
67. "Falsely borne in hand," deceived.
71. "Assay," attempt.
79. "Regards of safety and allowance," terms stipulating that Fortinbras should not ravage the country and that his troops should not be molested.
80. "Likes," pleases.
81. Express the line in ordinary phraseology.
83. "Well-took," well taken — well done.
86. "Expostulate," discuss.
90. "Wit," understanding. In what sense is the word used when the saying is quoted.
95. "Art," referring to Polonius's artificial style — his juggling with words.
105. "Perpend," consider. Why short line?
109. "Beautified" has been much discussed; it probably means beautiful, or perhaps accomplished. But if either of these meanings be taken, it does not appear why Polonius calls it "a vile phrase." Does it seem likely that Hamlet would use the word in the disparaging sense of artificial beauty?
116. "Doubt," suspect.
119. How should "love" be pronounced?
120. "Numbers," verses.
121. "Reckon," to scan, to put into verse.
124. "Whilst this machine is to him," a euphuistic phrase meaning, while this body belongs to him.
134. Had Polonius "perceived it"?
137. "Table-book," tablet. Polonius means that he did not merely record the matter in his mind, but that he did something about it.
138. "Winking," to wink at a thing is to pretend not to see it.
142. "Star," sphere.
143. "Prescripts," precepts.
146. "Fruits," profit.
149. "Watch," sleepless state.
150. "Lightness," lightheadedness; "declension," declining, downward course.
160. "Centre," that is, of the earth; perhaps of the palm of the hand, which is an important point in the science of palmistry.

163. Why does Polonius say "loose" ?

164. "Arras," tapestry; named from Arras, the town where it was made.

169. "Wretch," sometimes used as a term of endearment.

171. "Board," speak to; "presently," at once. Are the words, "O, give me leave," addressed to the king and the queen, or to Hamlet ?

175. "Fishmonger;" Hamlet's meaning has been much discussed; probably he means that Polonius has been sent to fish out the secret of his — Hamlet's — madness.

182. "For if . . . carrion." Of course Hamlet pretends to read this out of the book. However, the idea hinges on to what he has said of the rarity of honest men, and it probably means, — If the sun, letting fall its rays on a dead dog, breeds maggots therein —. Here he stops, and putting on his "antic disposition," asks abruptly, "Have you a daughter ?" When Polonius has replied, Hamlet goes on to say that the old man should not allow her to walk too much in the carrion-breeding sun — that is, in the wicked world — for then she may marry a bad man and have children who are not honest. Later in the play the idea recurs (Act III, Scene I, line 122); Hamlet asks Ophelia why she would be "a breeder of sinners." These subtleties are lost on Polonius, as a matter of course, in spite of the fact that he can find out truth though it were hid "in the centre."

194. The actor has an excellent opportunity for making a good effect in Hamlet's reply, "Words, words, words." The first word comes out in a tantalizing way, in keeping with the "antic disposition." Then, perhaps, it strikes him that the reply was better than he thought, for is not much that is written in books mere words ? So he nods his head reflectively, much satisfied with his sweeping criticism on literature, as he repeats the word twice. The twice-repeated expression, "Except my life," in lines 218, 219, may be read in a similar way.

195, 196. Here is one of Shakespeare's favorite tricks in word-play. A word used or implied by one person is taken up in another meaning by another. Explain.

196. "Who," whom.

205, 206. Hamlet's allusion to the crab is just the opposite of what might be expected. Why does he thus reverse his thought ?

209. See note on lines 195, 196.

229. "Indifferent," average.

245. "Confines," places of confinement.

263. "Then are our beggars bodies, *etc.*" Hamlet seems by no means sure that he makes a sensible observation here, for he says, "By my fay (faith), I cannot reason." Perhaps he means, — If ambition is but a shadow's shadow, then kings and "outstretched (strutting) heroes" are mere nothings, while unambitious beggars are the real substance.

270, 271. Dreadfully attended ;" my servants are a poor lot; "beaten," plain, unceremonious."

275. "My thanks, *etc.*;" my thanks are not worth a halfpenny. Why?

280. "But to the purpose." Hamlet speaks ironically here. Why?

282. "Modesties." Shakespeare frequently uses the plural of *love* and other words, as modesty here, where we should use the singular.

288. "Consonancy of;" "of" is used in the sense of from.

290. "A better proposer," a better speaker.

296. "My anticipation, *etc.*" Hamlet means that he will tell them why they have been sent for, because he will thus save them from the dishonor of revealing ('discovering') the confidence that the king and the queen have placed in them; this confidence shall "moult no feather;" *i.e.*, shall not lose a particle of itself.

308. "Express," fitted to its purpose.

312. "Quintessence," fifth essence; a term used by alchemists, signifying what is left of any substance when the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, have been removed.

320. "Lenten," meager, such as would suit the season of lent.

321. "Coted," overtook.

323. In the speech beginning in this line, Hamlet mentions the usual characters of the play of his time — the king, the humorous man (such a character as Jacques in *AS YOU LIKE IT*; not the clown), *etc.* "Tickle o' the sere" is a puzzle to the commentators; one ingenious explanation is that the "sere," or *sear*, is a part of a gun lock, which, if worn, makes the gun go off easily; hence the expression means, — those who laugh with but slight reason. "The lady, *etc.*," is perhaps a hit at the talkativeness of women; Hamlet says the woman of the piece shall talk all she wishes, even though she spoil the meter.

333. "Their residence," their remaining in the city. Here, as frequently in the plays, Shakespeare alludes to the customs and events of his own country; the city meant is therefore London.

335. "Inhibition," prohibition. The allusion is to the history of the drama in London in Shakespeare's time, though its meaning is not wholly clear. One explanation is that reference is made to the closing by law of all theaters except the Globe and the Fortune, in 1600 and 1601, because the actors indulged in personal abuse of public persons; on this account many players traveled in the country. Another explanation is that the actors took to the road because they were crowded out of the practice of their profession in the city by the Children of the Queen's Revels, to whom a license was given, in 1603-4, to play at the Blackfriars Theater and other places. The note explains "innovation" also.

337. "Estimation" is explained by "are they so followed?"

342. "Aery," a brood of young hawks; "eyases," the same — nestlings.

343. "Cry out on the top of question." A variety of ingenious explanations is given; allusion is probably made to the high-pitched voices of the children. "Tyrannically clapped," noisily applauded; the part of the tyrant in the old plays having been a noisy one.

345. "Stages," probably stagers, actors.



346. "Rapiers . . . goosequills." Allusion is here made to the professional writers of plays, mature men, and therefore wearers of rapiers, and to the children, whose weapons, if they had any, could be no more terrible than goosequills.

349. "Escoted," paid. "Will they pursue, *etc.*," will they pursue the vocation of acting only until their voices change?

354. "Exclaim against, *etc.*," to do that which will endanger their future success.

356. "To tarre," to set on; used especially in reference to dogs.

358. "Argument," the plot of a play. The meaning of the sentence is not clear; perhaps it means that whenever a stage director contracted for a new play, the poet and the actors quarreled, the poet insisting that it should suit the taste of the time; that is, that it should be written for the children-players; the actors insisting that this kind of plays was ruinous both to themselves and the drama.

361. "Throwing about of brains," ingenious argument.

363. What is the antecedent of "it"?

364. "Hercules, *etc.*" The sign of the Globe Theater was Hercules with the world on his shoulders. The idea probably is that the children drew away the audiences from Shakespeare's own playhouse.

367. "Mows," mouths, grimaces.

369. "In little," in miniature; "'Splood," God's blood — an oath.

374. "Appurtenance," proper accompaniment.

375. "Comply with," embrace; entertain.

376. "Extent," that is, extent of courtesy.

382. "I am but mad north-north-west, *etc.*." Much has been written on this speech, but nothing conclusively. "To know a hawk from a heronshew (heron)" is said to be the original form of the proverb. There is a tool called a hawk; and the corrupted form as it appears in the text, therefore makes sense; but it is probable that the original meaning of the saying is the true one. FURNESS gives Mr. J. C. Heath's explanation, which is,—"The expression obviously refers to the sport of hawking. Most birds, especially one of heavy flight like the heron, when roused by the falconer or his dog, would fly down or with the wind, in order to escape. When the wind is from the north, the heron flies toward the south, and the spectator may be dazzled by the sun, and be unable to distinguish the hawk from the heron. On the other hand, when the wind is southerly, the heron flies toward the north, and it and the pursuing hawk are clearly seen by the sportsman, who then has his back to the sun, and without difficulty knows the hawk from the heronshew. A curious reader may further observe that a wind from the precise point north-north-west would be in the eye of the sun at half-past ten in the forenoon, a likely time for hawking, whereas 'southerly' includes a wider range of wind for a good view."

397. "Buz, buz!" an exclamation of contempt; probably an equivalent to the modern slang word, "chestnuts."

399. "Then came, *etc.*," a line of an old song, it is conjectured.

403. A "scene individable" is a drama in which the Unity of Place

is observed; a "poem unlimited" is a drama in which there are frequent changes of scene, as in this play. In the next line is allusion to the same subject, "law of writ" referring to the observance of the dramatic rules, "liberty" referring to the disregard of the same.

407. The allusion is to an old ballad which Percy gives in his *Reliques*, with the comment,— "It was retrieved from utter oblivion by a lady, who wrote it down from memory as she had formerly heard it sung by her father." The first stanza is as follows:—

*"Have you not heard these many years ago,  
Jephtha was judge of Israel?  
He had one daughter and no mo,  
The which he loved passing well:  
And, as by lott,  
God wot,  
It so came to pass,  
As Gods will was,  
That great wars there should be,  
And none should be chosen chief but he."*

417, 420, 422. These lines are explained by the preceding note.

423. "Row," line; probably stanza, here; "chanson," ballad.

424. "Abridgement," those who will abridge, or shorten, my talk. There may also be a play on the word abridgement, which was a dramatic performance.

427. "Valanced," having a fringe, or beard: the valance was the fringe on the tester of a bed.

429. "Young lady and mistress," addressed to the boy who took female parts in the plays.

431. "Chopine," a high cork shoe.

432. "Uncurrent gold, *etc.*" FURNESS quotes Douce: "There was a ring on the coin, within which the sovereign's head was placed; if the crack extended from the edge beyond this ring, the coin was rendered unfit for currency."

434. "Like French falconers, *etc.*;" the passage is supposed to be a contemptuous reference to French sportsmen, who are said to be content with small game.

441. "Caviare to the general;" caviare is the pickled roe of the sturgeon, but it was a rarity in Shakespeare's time, and not in demand by "the general"—the common people.

442. "Cried in the top of mine," were better than mine.

444. "Modesty," moderation, restraint.

445. "Sallets," salads; that is, there was nothing high-flown in it.

448. "Affection," affectation.

449. "Handsome" means natural beauty; "fine," artistic beauty.

450. "'Twas Aeneas' tale to Dido." There has been much speculation as to whether Shakespeare took the tale of Pyrrhus, as here set



down, from some other author, from some unpublished work of his own, or whether he wrote it especially for "Hamlet." The third supposition is probably the true one.

455. "Hyrceanian beast," the tiger.

459. What word in the line is especially well used ?

461. "Heraldry," color.

462. "Gules," a term in heraldry, meaning red; "trick'd," a term in heraldry, meaning drawn, as opposed to blazoned, described.

467. "O'er-sized," as paper is sized — covered with a thin layer of glue.

478. "But," merely.

486. "Neutral to his will and matter," indifferent to him and to the matter upon which he has been working his vengeance.

489. "Rack," mass of clouds.

495. "Proof eterne," eternal power of resistance.

500. "Fellies," the pieces of wood composing the rim of a wheel.

506. "Mobled," veiled, or muffled.

510. "Bisson rheum," blinding tears.

521. "Milch," milk-giving; hence, moist.

522. "Passion," compassion, sorrow.

527. "Bestowed," lodged.

528. "The abstract and brief chronicles," those who reflect the times, as the newspapers do to-day; and it is true that you would better have a bad epitaph than *their* ill report.

533. "Bodykins," diminutive of body.

557. "Conceit," imagination.

559. Scan. "Aspect," is accented on the final syllable.

560. "Function," action.

565. "Cue," a well known stage word; explain its meaning here.

568. "Free," innocent.

572. "Peak," to mope.

573. "John-a-dreams," John of dreams; a nickname for any silly dreaming fellow. "Unpregnant," not fired by.

576. "Defeat," destruction.

583, 584. "Pigeon-liver'd," cowardly; gall, which pigeons were supposed to lack, was supposed to be the cause of courage. Hamlet says he lacks the courage to feel the bitterness of oppression.

585. The kite is a bird that feeds on dead bodies, as those that hung on gibbets.

587. "Kindless," unnatural; without the feeling of his kind.

594. "About, my brain." Hamlet addresses his own mind, commanding it to set to work.

597. "Presently," immediately.

603. "Tent," probe; "blench," flinch.

610. "Relative;" the word has the force of reliable. Hamlet means that he does not want to take the king's life merely on the testimony of a spirit which may have been the devil in the guise of the dead king.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. Is Polonius's theory of the cause of Hamlet's madness necessary to the story? 2. Has Hamlet's resolve to have a play enacted before the king a necessary bearing on the story? 3. Is the scene, as a whole, one of primary or of secondary importance? 4. Show from a line between lines 50 and 60 that Polonius has an eye to dramatic effect. 5. Polonius's speech beginning in line 43 may properly be accompanied with much deliberate bobbing of the head, with the half-closing of one eye, and at the end, with the pursing of the lips; what quality of his is thus represented? 6. As Polonius pronounces line 85 (the second part), he gathers himself up for a great speech: can you fancy his manner — tone, speed of words, expression, attitude? 7. As he pronounces the speech, the queen shifts uneasily in her seat and glances fitfully at the king; why? 8. In the same speech and the next one of Polonius, show his love for the dramatic. 9. Find a line which expresses Polonius's irritation because his dramatic recital is not appreciated. 10. When Polonius says to Hamlet, "Do you know me, my lord?" his manner has the kind solicitude of one speaking to a child or a person hopelessly demented; Hamlet, perhaps, looks at him a moment, as if trying to recall his face, and then says, quickly, as if he has suddenly remembered who the old man is, "Excellent well, *etc.*," (line 175); is this the action of an insane man, of one who pretends insanity, or neither? 11. As Kemble read the words, "Slanders, sir" (line 198), he tore the leaf out of the book; why? 12. What change in Hamlet's manner when Polonius leaves? (line 221). 13. At the words, "You go to seek, *etc.*" (line 222), the Polonius of Mr. Sothern's company made significant gestures about his head, looked at Hamlet and then potted away? what did the action mean? 14. Where does Hamlet first show suspicion of his friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? 15. The first part of line 293 is marked as an "aside," but some critics think it should not be; what do you think? 16. At the words, "for my uncle is king of Denmark, *etc.*" (line 266), one actor takes up a locket that hangs from the neck of one of his friends, and looks at the king's picture therein; in a moment he casts it from him with disgust; explain the reason and also the connection with the conversation immediately preceding. 17. What is the relative position of Hamlet and his two friends at the words, "at each ear a hearer" (line 386)? 18. Explain the sudden change of subject in the words, "You say right, sir," and show what the actor must do to express it. 19. How does Hamlet's manner change after the re-entrance of Polonius? Why? 20. The short speech of Polonius, in line 408, is intended to please Hamlet, but it only bores him; his shrug and his weary look are pretty sure to make the audience laugh; is there any reason, from the standpoint of dramatic effect, why a laugh should come just here? 21. Consider lines 503 and 508, and explain where the laugh comes in. 22. In line 523 does Polonius say that it is Hamlet or the actor who has tears in his eyes? Perhaps the answer to the question may be learned from lines later in the scene. 23. Hamlet's manner changes again when he is alone; in which of his words, as seen in this scene, is he sincerely

himself? 24. In reading lines 609-10, Irving takes out his tables, and taps them with his finger; why? 25. What characters in the scene show a disposition to accomplish their ends by trickery? 26. Explain in detail why each of the speeches of Polonius is comedy. 27. What phase of his character is shown in the words, "have while she is mine" (line 106)? 28. Show all evidences of Hamlet's "antic disposition." 29. Do his periods of "madness" come and go as he wills them, or otherwise? 30. Do you detect the "method" in his madness? 31. What is his manner toward people whom he does not like? 32. Show two elements of Hamlet's character in the speech beginning in line 533. 33. In the final soliloquy, what contrast does Hamlet draw between himself and the player? 34. What reason does Hamlet first give himself for not carrying out his revenge? 35. Is his second reason, namely, that the spirit he saw may have been the devil, a good reason, or merely an excuse? 36. If the latter, then what was the real reason? 37. Could his delay be due to insanity or to any mental defect? 38. Most actors read the last two lines of the scene as if the giving of the play were first thought of just at that moment; Irving reads them as if they were a culmination of a line of thought; which way is right? What word would he emphasize most? 39. There is at least one passage of sublime poetry in the scene; where? 40. What is significant about its form? 41. Pope and other Shakespearean critics have thought "Aeneas' tale to Dido" was intended to be highly bombastic, and was meant to be laughed at; other critics think quite the reverse; what is your view? Is it a hollow piece of rhetoric, or a fragment of a spirited epic? 42. At least one critic thinks that the exclamation, "hum," in line 594, does not properly belong there; explain why. (Consider lines 545, 609, and 610.)

*Questions on the Act.* 1. What step of the story is revealed in the act? 2. As at the end of the first act, explain Hamlet's own point of view of the situation in which he finds himself. 3. How does the dramatist bind the interest of the audience over to the next act? 4. Which predominates in the act—events of the mind or events of the body? In other words, is there more thinking, or doing?

## ACT III.

*Scene I.*

*Suggestion of Scene.*—The same as Act I, Scene II.

1. "Drift of circumstance," roundabout method.
7. "Forward," inclined.
12. "Forcing of his disposition," compelling himself to be amiable.
13. "Niggard of question," reluctant to begin discussion.
14. "Assay," try; that is, tempt.
17. "O'er-raught," the old past tense of overreached; that is, overtook.

26. "Edge," incitement.
29. "Closely," secretly.
31. "Affront," meet.
32. Scan.
44. "Book." What is there in this speech and in the end of Hamlet's soliloquy to indicate what book it was? In Mr. Sothorn's presentation, Polonius took up a little book that hung by a chain from Ophelia's girdle, and put it into her hand.
45. "Color," give excuse for, explain.
47. "Much," in the sense of often. "That with, *etc.*," to the end of the speech is a strangely mixed metaphor, yet the meaning is clear; explain.
52. "To," compared to.
53. "Painted," false.
56. Let us suppose that before Hamlet enters, the King and Polonius have ascended the stair to the left, and "bestowed" themselves behind the curtains of the balcony at the back of the stage; occasionally they peep out. Ophelia kneels near the throne, and is apparently engaged in prayer. Hamlet enters looking steadfastly at the floor, and thus does not see her, but sinks down into the great chair at the left, and recites his soliloquy.
59. This line has been much discussed. One does not take up arms against a sea. Pope suggested that *siege* might have been meant, as it completes the figure begun in "slings" and "arrows." However, Shakespeare often combines metaphors as he has done here, and does it effectively. May we not coin the expression, *double metaphor*, to offset the disparaging expression, "mixed metaphor"? Consider whether lines 47-49 contain a double or a mixed metaphor.
65. "Rub," a figure from the game of bowls; it meant that the ball was impeded by striking something in its course.
67. "Coil," turmoil.
68. "Give us pause," cause us to pause, to meditate; "respect," consideration, reason.
70. "Does "time" mean time in the abstract, or *the times*?
75. "Quietus" is the legal term for the final settling of an account. What does it mean here?
76. "Bare bodkin," a mere dagger, perhaps an unsheathed dagger; "fardels," burdens.
77. Dr. Johnson objected to a certain word in this line; what one? Is the word well selected?
79. "Bourn," boundary. Has not one of the characters in the play returned from that "bourn"? Can you explain away the apparent inconsistency?
84. What is "the native *hue* of resolution"?
86. "Pitch" is said to refer to the summit of the falcon's flight. Do you detect a change of figure in this and the next line? Is the metaphor mixed or double?
103. "Honest," virtuous.

107. Hamlet means that a beautiful woman may so take flattery to heart that her good character may suffer thereby.

109. Does Ophelia use the words, "beauty" and "honesty," in the same sense as Hamlet uses them? "Commerce," conversation.

114. "Sometime," formerly.

119. "It," that is, "old stock."

126. "Beck," ready to be beckoned to me.

145. "Paintings." Does Hamlet mean Ophelia? If not, whom?

147. "Jig" and "amble" refer to affected modes of walking.

148. "Nick-name" was formerly "an eke-name," "eke" meaning additional.

148. "Make your wantonness your ignorance," attribute your wickedness to your ignorance.

152. To whom does "all but one" refer?

163. "Blown," full-blown.

164. "Ecstasy," madness.

166. "Affections," the things that affect him.

169. "On brood," brooding.

170. "Disclose," the first chipping of the shell by the young birds.

172. Scan.

187. "Round," direct.

189. "Find," discover his secret.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. What new complication in the lives of Hamlet and Ophelia does the scene reveal? 2. Is this addition to the story of primary or only of secondary importance? 3. Show that ideas set forth in preceding scenes are strengthened and elaborated here. 4. Show that the dramatic effect of the scene is heightened by the fact that two of the principal characters are hidden. 5. Some actors in reciting the famous soliloquy (line 56) give it in a loud voice, and accompany it by violent action; show this to be bad taste. 6. At the words, "Ay, there's the rub," there should be a marked change of manner and expression; what and why? 7. Although there is no stage direction to warrant it, all actors, at some place in the scene, have Hamlet discover the King and Polonius in their hiding place; one method is this,—when Ophelia gives Hamlet back his gifts, the inquisitive, meddling Polonius, in his anxiety to see what happens, drops his long chamberlain's staff, which falls with a clatter upon the floor; and Hamlet knows that he is watched. Is this a good method of revealing to Hamlet the fact that he is spied upon? and is this the proper place for such a revelation? 8. Would the discovery on Hamlet's part account for his question, "Are you honest"? (line 103.) If not, what does account for it? 9. In the questions Hamlet puts to Ophelia at this point, is he grave, airy, satiric, angry, wild, or hysterical? If not one—or more—of these, then what? 10. When Hamlet says, "but now the time gives it proof" (line 114), would it be suitable for the actor to look over his shoulder at the trembling curtain in the balcony? 11. The speeches in which Hamlet tells Ophelia to go to a nunnery, are usually read wildly, violently; a critic has suggested that they should be read

with the softness of tenderest indulgence for the frailty of Ophelia. Which is the better way? 12. Which manner comports better with the following words of Hamlet? — “Let the doors be shut, *etc.*” (line 133), “Marry a fool, for wise men, *etc.*” (line 141), “You jig, you lisp, *etc.*” (line 147). 13. Do the words, “Where’s your father?” (line 131) indicate the proper place for Hamlet’s discovery of the two men in hiding? 14. Booth’s manner at this point was this:—Approaching the kneeling Ophelia from behind, he took her head between his hands and turned it back until he could look straight into her face, and said, “Where’s your father?” When Ophelia, replied, “At home, my lord,” he plucked away his hands with the utmost grief and horror at the detestable lie, madly uttered his next short speech, and rushed away only to return in a few seconds to tell her again to go to a nunnery. A critic has suggested this:—Hamlet, having discovered the “lawful espials,” and not wishing to accuse Ophelia of complicity, holds out his hand toward her; she, thinking his cruel mood has passed, and believing he wants to take her to his arms, forgets that she is an accomplice to her father and the king, and runs toward Hamlet with a joyful little cry; but he checks her with a gesture, and asks, “Where’s your father?” With an involuntary glance at the gallery, she replies, “At home, my lord.” Then the outraged lover pours forth his rage in torrents. Can you choose between these two ways of playing this part of the scene? 15. What is a suitable action for Hamlet when he says, “All but one?” 16. What further craftiness of certain characters does the scene reveal? 17. Lines 46 and 49 inclusive sound more like the keen observation of another character in the play than Polonius; who? 18. In commenting on the soliloquy of Hamlet, Dr. Johnson wrote, “Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: ‘Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress, it is necessary to decide whether, after our present state, we are to be, or not to be.’” Malone wrote, “Dr. Johnson’s explication of the first five lines of this passage is surely wrong. Hamlet is not deliberating whether after our present state we are to exist or not, but whether he should continue to live, or put an end to his life.” Choose between these two interpretations. 19. What are the arguments pro and con that Hamlet uses in the soliloquy? 20. Is it not in keeping with Hamlet’s character to mean something other than the gifts which Ophelia holds in her hand, when he says, “I never gave you aught” (line 96)? 21. Does Hamlet show any evidence of real or assumed madness in the scene? 22. May he be afflicted with spasms of incipient madness? 23. Just where is the boundary line between madness and sanity? 24. Is Ophelia excusable for lying to Hamlet? 25. What evidence in the scene that the king has excellent judgment? 26. What evidence that he is a man of decision? 27. Does it not appear, as the play progresses, that the king is one whose character has “taken corruption” from “some vicious mole of nature”? 28. Where,



near the end of the scene, does Polonius again fall into his accustomed unconscious comedy? 29. Do you suppose that at this time his mind reverts to "a farm and carters"? 30. Point out the best poetry and philosophy in the scene. 31. Show that at the end of the scene the poet binds the interest over three scenes.

*Scene II.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* The same as the preceding and Scene II of Act I. The great chair at the left is drawn farther back; and the double curtained door under the balcony, together with the hallway beyond, which, it will be remembered, is higher than the level of the stage, forms a secondary stage, where the players are to present the play in which Hamlet has inserted "some dozen or sixteen lines." When the scene begins, the curtains are pulled together, concealing the hallway, and they remain so until "the dumb-show enters." The king, the queen, and court enter through the door at the left; the royal pair taking the throne at the right, and Ophelia the great chair. Polonius stands just beyond the throne, and beyond him, making a diagonal line to the secondary stage, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and other lords and ladies of the court. Behind Ophelia, stands Horatio; at her feet, on the floor, reclines Hamlet, supporting himself on his right elbow; in his hand he has Ophelia's great fan of peacock feathers, with which he idly toys, and which he occasionally peeks through to note whether the play "catches the conscience of the king." The central space is clear, so that the audience may see everything that goes on on both stages.

2. What word in the line is especially well selected?

10. Periwigs were worn only by actors in Shakespeare's times.

11. "Groundlings," those who stood on the ground before the stage in the early theaters; this part of the theater had neither floor nor seats.

13. "Dumb-shows," pantomimes that in Shakespeare's time were used to represent scenes that would be too long if spoken. It appears, too, that in Denmark, a dumb-show preceded the enacting of the play. See the dumb-show in this scene.

14. "Termagant," a Saracen deity, of violent character, often presented in the miracle plays of the middle ages. Herod also was a violent character in these old religious dramas.

21. "From," contrary to.

25. "Pressure," impression, as of a seal.

26. "Come tardy off," come short of.

28. "Censure," judgment.

34. "Journeymen," workmen between the apprentice and the master workman, usually employed by the day.

40. In Shakespeare's time the clowns often interrupted the play and engaged in wit combats with persons in the audience.

42. "Barren," empty headed.

55. "Coped withal," encountered.

58. Scan.

61. "Candied," sugared, flattering.
62. "Pregnant hinges of the knee," the bowing and bending before a lord that brings rewards from him.
70. "Blood and judgement," passion and reason.
80. "Comment of thy soul," with all the powers of thy mind.
81. "Occulted," hidden.
82. "One speech;" what one does Hamlet mean?
83. "Damned ghost," one from the lower regions, and not to be believed.
85. "Stithy," smithy.
88. "In censure of his seeming," in judgment of his behavior.
- 89, 90. The meaning is,—If he shows any signs of guilt which I do not detect, I am willing to bear the responsibility of my failure.
91. "Idle" is understood by the critics to mean lightheaded, foolish, mad; and the actors usually interpret the word the same way.
- 93, 94. What play on words in these two lines? The same play may be made in German and in Latin. The chameleon was supposed to feed on air.
105. "Capitol." See "Suggestion of Scene" of Act III, Scene I, of *JULIUS CÆSAR*, of this series.
116. "Jig-maker," a maker of ballads.
118. "Within's," within these.
122. "Suit of sables." There is much doubt as to this passage, and there has been much discussion about it. The best explanation seems to be that the furs called sables are the finery of the northern nations; Hamlet means, then, that he will clothe himself gayly, leaving "blacks" for the devil.
126. "Not thinking on," being forgotten.
127. "O, the hobby-horse is forgot," probably a line from a ballad of Shakespeare's time, alluding to the opposition of the Puritans to the morris-dances, in which was a figure called the hobby-horse.
130. "Miching mallecho," sneaking mischief; "mallecho" is of Spanish origin.
132. "Belike," perhaps; "argument," plot.
139. "Posy," a short verse or motto, such as was often engraved in a ring. Hamlet refers to the brevity of the Prologue; then what is the emphatic word in Ophelia's reply?
142. "Phœbus' cart," the chariot of Phœbus, the sun.
143. "Wash," the sea; "Tellus," the earth.
144. What word in the line is especially forcible?
146. "Hymen," in Greek mythology, the god of marriage.
147. "Commutual," an intensified form of mutual.
152. "I distrust you," am distrustful, solicitous, about you.
- 154, 155. The lines probably mean,—Woman's love and fear vary in the same manner; they are either nothing or everything.
161. "Operant," active; "leave," cease.
169. "Instances," motives.
170. "Respects," considerations. How should "love" be pronounced in this line?



173. How is "speak" to be pronounced? Consider that the Irish pronounce many words as they were pronounced in Shakespeare's time.

176. "Validity," strength, vigor.

180. "What to ourselves is debt," what we owe only to ourselves to do.

184. "Enactures," resolutions.

196. "Seasons," makes; though the figure is not retained. "Ripens," "matures," "throws in an ingredient, which constitutes, *etc.*," have been suggested.

198. Scan.

206. "An anchor's cheer," an anchorite's fare.

207. "Opposite," opponent, obstacle to joy; "blanks," blanches, makes pale.

217. Explain the line.

224. "The mouse-trap" — because it is to "catch the conscience of the king;" "tropically," figuratively.

228, 229. "Free," innocent. "Let the galled jade wince," a proverb. "Withers," the part of a horse between the shoulders.

232. "Chorus;" several of Shakespeare's plays, as *Henry V*, had choruses, which explained the drama.

233. "I could interpret, *etc.*;" an allusion to the puppet shows, during the playing of which an interpreter sat on the stage and explained to the audience.

239. Scan.

240. "Confederate season," favorable opportunity.

241. Scan.

255. The stanza is probably from some old ballad which Hamlet thinks of in this moment of frenzy.

259. "Feathers" were much worn by actors in Shakespeare's time.

260. "Turn Turk;" as great a change as could be — from Christian to infidel.

261. "Provincial roses, *etc.*;" actors wore in the shape of roses of Provins, or Provence, rosettes on their "razed," or slashed, shoes.

262. "Cry," metaphor for company; alluding to a cry of hounds.

263. "Share;" the actors in the dramatic companies were paid shares of the receipts, rather than salaries.

268. "Pajock," peacock.

275. "Recorders," a kind of musical instrument, like a flute.

278. "Perdy," a corruption of *par Dieu*.

285. "Distempered," disturbed.

287. "Cholor," anger.

290. "Purgation;" Hamlet used the word in two senses, the medical and the legal; the latter referring to the clearing of one's self from a crime.

293. "Frame," form.

301. "Pardon," permission to leave.

305. "Wholesome," sound, sane.

311. "Amazement," disturbance of mind; "admiration," wonder.

318. "Trade," business.

320. "Pickers and stealers," hands; an allusion to the catechism, in which we are instructed to keep our hands from picking and stealing.

327. "While the grass grows, the steed starves," is the full proverb.

329. "To withdraw with you;" a passage not understood. Perhaps Hamlet speaks it to Guildenstern, who keeps following about; if so, he means, — Come to one side a moment. Then he adds, "Why do you, *etc.*?" "To recover the wind" is a hunting term, meaning to get to windward of the game, thus startle it and make it run in the direction of the toil.

332. This speech is another puzzle. Probably the meaning is, — If I seem too bold, believe that my love for you makes me so. CLARK and WRIGHT wittily observe, "As Hamlet did not well understand them (Guildenstern's words), commentators may be excused from attempting explain them."

341. "Ventages," holes of the flute.

347. What are the emphatic pronouns in the speech beginning in this line?

355. "Fret;" a play on the word; explain.

359. "Presently," immediately.

368. "Bent;" see note on Act II, Scene II, line 30.

379. Nero murdered his own mother.

381. Notice the two words that are emphatic because they are contrasted.

383. "Shent," rebuked.

384. "To give them seals," to confirm by action.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. Comparing this scene with all that have preceded, which contains the most intense climax? 2. Where is the climax in this scene, and what makes it a climax? 3. Why does the poet begin so critical a scene with a conversation so tranquil and so unrelated to the main theme of the play? 4. Why is the dramatic effect strengthened by the fact that Hamlet expresses his love and admiration for Horatio immediately before the players act their play? 5. Is the dramatic effect heightened by the revelation that Hamlet has, since the ghost scene, revealed to Horatio all that the ghost told him (lines 77, 78)? 6. What effect on the dramatic situation has Hamlet's jesting with the king, Polonius and Ophelia just before the play begins? 7. Is the dramatic effect strengthened by the acting of the "dumb-show" before the real play? 8. If the dumb-show were omitted, what lines shortly after it would have to be omitted? 9. If it be played, should the king and the queen be too much occupied chatting together to notice it, or should they look directly at it? 10. Do you see any reason, deep-rooted in the character of Hamlet, why the scene should not end at the climax, rather than run on some time longer, as it does? 11. In what manner should Hamlet pronounce his speeches to the players? 12. Is there not a certain princely tact in Hamlet's casual words, "Will you two help to hasten them" (line 51)? 13. Describe a change in Hamlet's manner in line 75. 14. At the expression, "I must be idle" (line 91),

Macready was accustomed to skip about the stage like a foolish boy, twirling his handkerchief over his shoulder, while Irving became very light and gay. The American actor, Mr. Otis Skinner, in playing the part, lies down on the edge of the secondary stage (a platform at the right, in his presentation) rests his head on the pillow provided for the player king, and swings one leg to and fro over the side of the elevation, apparently as happy as a boy out in the fields for a holiday. Which makes the best effect? 15. Note the "I-told-you-so" manner of Polonius when he says, "O, ho! do you mark that?" (Line 112.) 16. Should Hamlet's words to Ophelia just before the "dumb-show" enters, be heard by the king and the queen? 17. Note the hush of expectancy that falls upon the stage when the player king and the player queen begin their conversation. 18. What are the first lines of the players that "catch the conscience of the king?" Would his action include an alarmed glance at Hamlet, or would he avoid Hamlet's gaze? 19. The stage direction says the words, "Wormwood, wormwood" (line 168), are an "aside;" Fechter, and other actors after him, pronounced them to Horatio. Which is better? 20. Describe the state of mind of the king and the queen, and their looks, when the player queen says, "Both here and hence, *etc.*" (Lines 209, 210.) 21. Is Hamlet's speech, "If she should break it now," spoken in a loud, startling tone, a low, ominous tone, or—how? 22. Mr. Otis Skinner, I think, read the speech, "Madam, how like you this play?" (line 216) very abruptly. What was his purpose? 23. Note Hamlet's irony in the speech, "O, but she'll keep her word" (line 218). 24. The king asks, "Is there no offence in't?" (Line 219.) Had he not seen the "dumb-show?" 25. Most actors pronounce the speech, "No, no, they do but jest, *etc.*" (line 221), with a thinly veiled irony, or with an ominous significance; Irving, dryly, without the slightest warning of what is to come. Which is the better? 26. Would Irving pronounce Hamlet's next speech in the same way? 27. After the poison is poured into the sleeper's ear, the actor who plays Hamlet usually creeps or crawls across the floor, in the most intense excitement, explaining as he goes, "He poisons him i'n the garden, *etc.*" (line 245). Some critics decry this piece of "stage business." Do you agree? 28. At the words, "What, frightened with false fire" (line 250), some Hamlets rush to the king, grasp him by the wrist, and thrust an accusing finger into his very face. 29. Sometimes the short speeches between the rising of the king and the cry for lights, are all distinctly heard; sometimes they are lost in the uproar. Which is better? 30. When, in this scene, Booth found himself alone with Horatio, he would stagger toward his friend, fall on his neck with the "long, loud, mirthless laugh of a madman" (see FURNESS), and when he lifted his face he seemed years older. Irving, when he played Hamlet, at this place would throw himself into the throne and rock to and fro in intense excitement as he recited the lines about the "stricken deer." Can you choose between the methods of these two excellent actors? 31. As Irving pronounced the word "pajock," he would throw away Ophelia's fan (see Suggestion of

Scene); what is the point to this action? 32. At the word "belike" (line 278), the actor may very properly stop abruptly, as if he has suddenly changed his mind about something; why? 33. In what way does the manner of Hamlet change after the entrance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? 34. In reading the words, "My wit's diseased" (line 305), Mr. Sothern tapped his forehead a bit angrily (his Hamlet was ever angry); then turning to Horatio, winked confidentially. Is the effect good? 35. In addressing the words, "God bless you, sir" (line 357), to Polonius, Booth showed an utter weariness of spirit; Mr. Sothern, anger. Which manner is more in accord with Hamlet's character? Note that the talk about the cloud, and the speech, "'By and by' is easily said," should be read in the same manner, with the addition of contempt. 36. How does Hamlet's manner change when he finds himself alone? 37. How much has the matter of self-control to do with the question of sanity? 38. Does Hamlet lose his self-control in this scene? 39. Does the scene reveal any mental malady in Hamlet? 40. Compare Polonius's description of Hamlet's "declension into the madness wherein he now raves" (Act II, Scene II, lines 147-151) with what you know of his mental history, and determine how much of truth there was in the old counsellor's words. 41. Determine whether any of the following words describes Hamlet's mental condition: distempered, mad, frenzied, unbalanced, hysterical, abnormal, melancholy, distracted, frantic. 42. Whatever you determine his mental state is, how much of it is feigned? 43. Under what circumstances and in whose presence does he act in an unusual manner? 44. Does any unusual manner ever come upon him without his willing it? If so, when? 45. Does Hamlet ever encourage the court in the belief that he is insane? 46. In lines 66 to 75, Hamlet praises Horatio for an excellent trait which a certain other character in the play does not possess; who is it? 47. In his last speech in the scene, Hamlet says he could "drink hot blood," and could "do such bitter business as the day would quake to look on." Why doesn't he? In other words, why, having proved the guilt of the king, does he not kill him? 48. Why are certain passages in the scene written in prose? 49. Explain the why and the wherefore of the comedy parts. 50. Why does Shakespeare so mingle comedy and tragedy? 51. What is in the scene that shows Shakespeare's opinions concerning his own profession?

### *Scene III.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* Owing to the expense of setting so many scenes, actors are accustomed to combine as many as possible. As this scene is short, and as it does not require a new setting, we shall consider it a continuation of the preceding.

11. "The single and peculiar life," the private individual.
13. "Noyance," annoyance.
15. "The cease of majesty;" the death of a king.
17. "Massy," massive.
29. "She'll tax him home," reprove him thoroughly.

33. "Of vantage," from an advantageous position.

37. Explain "primal eldest curse."

39, 40. A doubtful sentence. Perhaps the meaning is,—Though my inclination (which is a matter of emotion) combines with my determination (which is a matter of duty), to force me to pray, yet I cannot because of the overpowering sense of my guilt.

41, 43. Do not these lines in some degree explain Hamlet's own tragedy?

43-46. There is a common saying, "Shakespeare never repeats." Any one who has read "Macbeth" will readily recognize a repeated idea there ("Hamlet" was written first). However, the saying probably arose from the fact that Shakespeare never repeats a character.

47. "To confront the visage of offence" is to resist sin.

49. "To be forestalled" is to be held from yielding to sin.

56. "The offence," the things gained by the offence.

57, 58. Is this a double or a mixed metaphor?

68. "Limed," caught with bird-lime.

69. "Assay," attempt.

75. "That would be scann'd"; that manner of revenge should be carefully considered.

79. "Hire and salary," not the deed of an avenger, but that of a hired assassin.

82. Had not the ghost told Hamlet how his "audit" stood? A critic suggests that the presence of the line indicates that Shakespeare drew the first sketch of the play without the ghost. This does not follow; Shakespeare was often careless about minor details.

88. "Hent," a doubtful word; perhaps grip.

95. "Stays," waits.

96. The line means,—This delay of mine is a medicine that only prolongs the life of the king.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. What new events of the plot does the scene foreshadow? 2. How does the scene compare in dramatic force with the preceding one? 3. Is the first speech of the king a confession? 4. What characteristic of Polonius is observed in line 30? 5. Give an abstract of the king's prayer. 6. Concerning Hamlet's long speech in this scene, Dr. Johnson said, "This speech, in which Hamlet, represented as a virtuous character, is not content with taking blood for blood, but contrives damnation for the man that he would punish, is too horrible to be read or uttered." Hazlitt says, "This refinement of malice here expressed by Hamlet, is in truth only an excuse for his own want of resolution." (See FURNESS.) Which of these two men had the better understanding of the character of Hamlet?

#### *Scene IV.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* The queen's closet, or private apartment; a room hung about with arras, or curtains. At the left and back is a broad doorway, with parted curtains. At the back and right, a great wardrobe of carved wood, through whose half-open door may be seen

masses of royal robes: On a table in the center, and over chairs about it, are shown a number of elaborate court dresses in attractive disorder. To the right is a recess in the wall; before it hangs the curtain behind which Polonius hides. At the right and front, an armchair.

1. "Straight," immediately; "lay home," speak to him freely.

4. "Sconce," hide.

11. Where does the emphasis fall in this line?

15. "Rood," cross. Note that the speech beginning in this line gives the keynote to the scene.

24. "Rat." The rats, when they infested a castle, naturally ran along behind the arras; the word, by metaphor, means spy.

26 and 32. These lines explain Hamlet's hasty thrust through the arras.

35, 36. Another mingling of metaphors.

38. "Sense," feeling.

42. "Rose," a word much discussed; it probably stands for "the ornament, the grace, of an innocent love." (See FURNESS.)

46. "Contraction," marriage contract.

49. "Solidity and compound mass," the earth.

50. "Tristful," sorrowful; "doom," the day of doom.

52. "Index," beginning.

53. Actors differ here. Formerly, Hamlets took two miniatures from their pockets; but it is plain that Hamlet would not carry his uncle's likeness about with him. In later presentations of the play, two portraits have been hung on the wall; in others, a portrait of Claudius has been placed on the wall, and a miniature of the dead king on a chain about Hamlet's neck; in others, the queen has had on her chain a miniature of her husband, and Hamlet one of his father on his own; finally, likenesses have been dispensed with altogether, and Hamlet has drawn the two "counterfeit presentments" to the "mind's eye."

58. "Station," attitude.

59. "Batten," fatten.

69. "Hey-day," vigor of youth; the derivation of the word is uncertain.

71, 72. "Sense," feeling; "motion," emotion.

74. "Ecstasy," madness.

75. "Quantity," portion.

77. "Cozen'd," cheated; "hoodman-blind," blind-man's buff.

81. "Mope," be stupid.

83. "Mutine," mutiny.

90. "Grained," dyed in the grain.

91. "Leave," give up; "tinct," color, dye.

95. Scan. "Vice of kings," a reference to the vice, or buffoon, in the old morality plays.

96. "Cutpurse." Purses were usually carried hanging to the girdle; hence a thief could easily cut the strap that held it.

97, 98. Hamlet throws further contempt upon the king by saying he took the crown as a thief would.



99. "Shreds and patches;" referring to the dress of the old court jester.

104. "Lapsed in time and passion;" Hamlet refers to his delay of the revenge — a delay brought about by the decrease of his passion.

105. "Important," urgent.

107. Scan.

109. "Amazement," disturbance of mind.

111. "Conceit," imagination.

115. "Incorporal," incorporeal, unsubstantial.

118. "Bedded," lying flat; sleeping, like the soldiers in the preceding line. "Excrements," outgrowths, as nails and hair.

119. "An end," on end.

124. "Capable," that is, of feeling; perhaps of action.

126. "Stern effects," stern actions.

127. "Will want true color;" will not be done properly; perhaps Hamlet is thinking of "hire and salary."

135. "Bodiless creation," habit of seeing spirits; "ecstasy," madness, as before.

148. "Compost," a fertilizer for land.

149. One critic regards "my virtue" a vocative.

150. "Pursy," short-winded; closely connected in thought with "fatness."

152. "Curb and woo," bow and beg.

166. An imperfect line; "master" is used in most editions.

168. "Desirous to be blest," repentant.

173. "Bestow," dispose of, take away.

179. "Bloat," bloated.

180. "Mouse," a term of endearment.

181. "Reechy," dirty, greasy.

187. "Paddock," toad; "gib," cat.

188. "Dear concernings," important matters.

191. "The reference must be to some fable in which an ape opened a basket containing live birds, then crept into it himself, and 'to try conclusions,' whether he could fly like them, jumped out and broke his neck. No one has as yet found any such fable recorded elsewhere."

CLARK and WRIGHT.

192. "Conclusions," experiments.

197. Is it recorded in the play how Hamlet learned that he was to be sent to England?

204. "Hoist," hoisted; "petar," an engine of war used to break down gates.

208. "Packing," plotting.

*Questions on the Scene.* 1. How much opportunity does this scene, in comparison with others, afford the actors to display their powers? 2. Does it help the story along? 3. As the scene was originally written, Hamlet reveals to his mother the guilt of the king, and thereafter she gives him secret aid; would it have been better to retain this circumstance in the final version? 4. Does the scene afford necessary oppor-



tunity for further character development? If so, is this a sufficient excuse for its being? 5. What circumstance in the scene may be called the beginning of the end? 6. Early in the scene, the queen, who is sitting in the chair at the right of the stage, begins to rise; and Hamlet takes her by the wrist and thrusts her back: where should this occur? 7. Where is the first climax in the scene? 8. Is Hamlet relieved or disappointed when he discovers that he has killed Polonius instead of the king? 9. Through much of the scene the queen rocks to and fro in her chair moaning and weeping; where should this action reach a climax? 10. One Hamlet, in reading the words, "Look here, upon this picture, and on this" (line 53), snatches the king's miniature from the queen's neck and holds it up before her; would it not be effective for him to throw it away contemptuously a little later? Where? 11. It is an old piece of "stage business" for Hamlet, in his fright, to kick the chair over, as if by accident, when the ghost enters; is this in good taste? 12. Do you notice a marked change that comes over the spirit of the scene after the entrance of the ghost? 13. When Hamlet says, "Do you see nothing there?" (line 128) does the queen look where Hamlet points? If so, why can she not see the ghost? 14. When Hamlet says, "So again, good night" (line 174), his mother, thinking his mood has softened, runs toward him with outstretched arms: but Hamlet checks her with a gesture; she weeps bitterly, and he adds, "I must be cruel, only to be kind:" what does he mean? 15. Show a fateful circumstance in the scene — one that thwarts Hamlet, and helps make his life more bitter and his death more sad. 16. What explanation does Hamlet make of his delay in the matter of carrying out his revenge? 17. What proofs does Hamlet offer to show that he is not mad? Are they good proofs? 18. Is his assertion that he is "mad in craft" (line 185) convincing proof that he is only acting madness?

*Questions on the Act.* 1. What important step in the story, and what developments as to character are set forth in the act? 2. What is the most important scene? 3. It has been said that a skillful dramatist takes about two acts and a half to entangle his plot, and the rest of the play to untangle it; are there any evidences thus far that this is the case in "Hamlet?" 4. Would it be more true to say that this play goes straight on to a final catastrophe? 5. Is there some truth in each statement as regards "Hamlet?"

#### ACT IV.

##### *Scene I.*

*Suggestion of Scene.* There is no reason for frequent changes of scene in this act; two, indeed, are enough; the student may select from those already described, what one he considers most suitable; or perhaps he may like to devise one for himself. In either case the one scene may be continued throughout the act, with the exception of Scene IV.

11. "Brainish," imaginary.

17. "Providence," care.

























































































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